REPORT RESUMES

ED 015 905 24 TE 000 205

PROSE FICTION--SHORT STORY, NOVEL. LITERATURE CURRICULUM V, TEACHER AND STUDENT VERSIONS.
BY- KITZHABER, ALBERT R.
OREGON UNIV., EUGENE
REPORT NUMBER CRP-H-149-72
REPORT NUMBER BR-5-0366-72
CONTRACT OEC-5-10-319
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$7.28 180P.

DESCRIPTORS- *CURRICULUM GUIDES, *ENGLISH CURRICULUM, *ENGLISH INSTRUCTION, *NOVELS, *SHORT STORIES, FICTION, GRADE 11, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, LITERARY ANALYSIS, LITERATURE, SECONDARY EDUCATION, STUDY GUIDES, SYMBOLS (LITERARY), TEACHING GUIDES, TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE, CURRICULUM RESEARCH, LITERARY GENRES, OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER, EUGENE, PROJECT ENGLISH,

THE BASIC CONVENTIONS THAT SHAPE THE CREATION OF THE SHORT STORY AND THE NOVEL ARE EXAMINED IN THIS 11TH-GRADE LITERATURE UNIT. THE SECTION ON THE SHORT STORY ILLUSTRATES NARRATIVE FICTION FORM THROUGH THE SHORT STORIES OF FORSTER, JACKSON, STEINBECK, THURBER, POE, MCCULLERS, HAWTHORNE, MANSFIELD, SALINGER, STEELE, AND COLLIER. EMPHASIZED IN EACH STORY'S INTERPRETATION IS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRADITIONAL FORM REQUIREMENTS UNIQUE TO THE SHORT STORY GENRE AND OF THE PARTICULAR LIMITATIONS IMPOSED UPON THE WRITER BY THIS FORM. THE SECTION ON THE NOVEL ILLUSTRATES THE RANGE OF PROSE FICTION THROUGH THREE NOVELS CHOSEN FOR ANALYSIS--"THE SCARLET LETTER," "THE GREAT GATSBY," AND "THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE." EACH NOVEL IS DISCUSSED AS A WHOLE, ANALYZED CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER FOR CLOSER TEXTUAL READING, AND COMPARED WITH OTHER WORKS STUDIED. BOTH SECTIONS INCLUDE INDUCTIVE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS DESIGNED TO CLARIFY THE STUDENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF SUBJECT, CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT, SETTING, SYMBOL, STYLE, TONE, FORM, AND POINT OF VIEW. TEXTS OF THE SHORT STORIES AND NOVELS ARE NOT INCLUDED. FIVE TESTS DESIGNED TO ACCOMPANY THIS UNIT ARE APPENDED. SEE ALSO ED 010 129 THROUGH ED 010 160, ED 010 803 THROUGH ED 010 832, TE 000 195 THROUGH TE 000 220, AND TE 000 227 THROUGH TE 000 249. (JB)

ED015905

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

PROSE FICTION:
Short Story
Novel

Literature Curriculum V
Teacher Version

TE000 205

The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

PROSE FICTION:
Short Story
Novel

Literature Curriculum V
Teacher Version

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Albert R. Kitzhaber
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

The Project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

"The Lottery"
by Shirley Jackson

In neither subject nor point of view is the short story unique as a form. There are no limitations as to the subject the writer may choose nor is there any restriction as to the point of view he may select. The events and attitudes an author may deal with in a short story are similar to those found in the novel. Yet anyone who reads a short story is immediately sure that there is considerable difference between a novel and a story. In this section we shall focus our attention upon the story as a genre and upon those elements of form that seem to set it apart, to make it unique.

"The Lottery" lends itself admirably to such an examination, largely because, while appearing "different," it nonetheless possesses in abundance the distinguishing elements of the short story. Students are likely to be impressed by the story. It has a powerful impact upon the reader. Yet even while students are discussing the question most likely to be predominant in their minds at this point (What does it mean?), teachers will most likely hear at least one and quite likely several remarks to the effect that "The Lottery" doesn't seem much like a short story. "What about plot? Pretty vague! And suspense? Is there any? Conflict? What conflict?"

Actually, of course, the students are being quite perceptive. While "The Lottery" has all these elements, they have been employed in a somewhat unusual proportion by Miss Jackson, who, for purposes of her own, has exercised considerable freedom in shaping her story. Thus it is in just such a story as "The Lottery" that students will be most likely to perceive that it is how a story is told that makes it unique. The subject matter of "The Lottery" could have been presented acceptably in an essay or even a tract. Yet all of its dramatic impact would be gone. That impact is completely dependent upon the careful structure of the story, completely a creature of the careful shaping of the elements of plot, theme, and character.

"The Lottery" bears a family resemblance to the parable or allegory. (Most students will have become familiar with the fable in the seventh grade and will have studied The Pearl in the eighth.) Characters are not fully developed. Both Steinbeck and Miss Jackson are primarily concerned that we see Kino and Old Man Warner, not as individuals, but as prototypes. Mrs. Hutchinson does not grow, change, or develop in this story, but from her words and actions there emerges a clear-cut picture of a woman who is unconcerned with the predicament of others ("Clean forgot what day it was... I thought my old man was stacking wood...and then I remembered it was the twenty-seventh and came a-running.") She laughs softly with her friend as she waits. When singled out as the victim, she cries out that it is not fair. Thus Miss Jackson uses Mrs. Hutchinson to make one of the major points of the story. Old Man Warner is another prototype ("People ain't what they used to be"). With him, Miss Jackson savagely makes her point about man's slavish adherence to custom, his feeling that anything sanctioned by long use is right, holy, and just. With the action of all the good citizens of the village she is making still another point. There is a terrible doubleness even in kind, good people that allows them to seek out and inflict cruelty upon a scapegoat without even a moment's hesitation.

So, we see that, having chosen the form of allegory or parable, Miss Jackson has increased the possibilities for expanding the meaning, the subject of her story. Evan her characters tend to illuminate that meaning; their personalities are subservient to the whole and are not developed for their own sake. Of course, the story is not a "naked" parable at all despite the flat characterization and fantastic events. The village is real and the people are alive. Neither one could summarize the meaning of this story in a neat statement. There is no moral tag, for the form has been so manipulated that the reader is left to ponder several possible though related themes.

Since the action of "The Lottery" is fantastic, one of the author's major problems is shaping the reader's attitude to the events therein. Point of view is enormously important in "The Lottery." The reader must feel that everything that happens is credible and commonplace. ("...men speaking of planting and rain, tractors and taxes.") The lottery is mentioned casually in the same breath as square dances and teen-age clubs. As the tone emerges, the reader is increasingly receptive to the reality of the situation. The affable Mr. Summers helps to emphasize the normality of the situation. Everybody is obviously in earnest about the lottery, so the reader accepts it too. Horror is thus counterbalanced by the dry cheery atmosphere of the story.

Is "The Lottery" a story, then? What elements are present in it that are unique to the genre? To begin with, a basic chronological pattern of organization is present, thin though the events that formulate that pattern may be. Villagers meet, draw lots, and stone a woman to death. There is no looseness of construction. We know that unity is essential to the short story. Everything in "The Lottery" speaks both of the tightness of construction as well as the unity of the basic elements. Characters, action, and point of view are manipulated to illuminate the subject. Actually, as noted earlier, the characters are part of the subject--they each are variants of an ordinary person, and they are more or less equivalent to terms involved in the "statement of truth" or central idea. Finally, "The Lottery" does what the short story must do and does it superbly. The story _is_ "a moment of revelation." In that moment the reader becomes dramatically aware of the awful ambivalence of the human soul.

"The Other Side of the Hedge"

by E. M. Forster

The two stories we are using to introduce this unit will probably make notable impressions of different natures on the students. "The Lottery" will probably elicit a more emotional response than "The Other Side of the Hedge," which is more apt to engender thoughtful, philosophical reflections and perhaps may crystallize some thoughts that have been stirring vaguely within the students' consciousness. The surface story in this case actually has almost no emotionally connotative details; the students will react rather to the underlying meaning they see in the allegory--a meaning which may not and perhaps should not be precisely the same in all students.

The response is, then, of a much different sort; yet the works are alike in that both belong to the genre short story. An analysis of some of their similarities should point to the characteristics of this genre. Such a comparison will probably reveal to the students that the narrow focus, concentration upon selected details, and omission or irrelevant material lead to a swift, clear impact which does not result from the more complex presentation found in the novel. The novel presents a problem with complexity and variation, the short story sets it forth in more direct form, usually through one rather than many incidents. The very brevity of the short story requires a skilled craftsmanship similar to the art of the poet; every element is deliberately placed to contribute to the desired singleness of impact.

These basic general requirements embrace a genre of protean aspects, for the variety of choices open to the author is practically unlimited, as we hope to demonstrate for the student in this unit. Not only may the author write about any subject he chooses and tell his story from any point of view that he wishes, but within the broad, general framework of the genre there is also a wide range of possible forms.

A closer look at "The Other Side of the Hedge" should serve to illustrate this statement. The author has chosen an allegorical form as the most fitting vehicle for his subject, and he has chosen a first person point of view to emphasize a subjective interpretation of a universal dilemma. Although the students will answer questions about Subject, Form, and Point of View, they should recognize that the three strands are closely woven together and in reality are often inseparable from each other. There are also some aspects of the writer's craft, such as symbolism, setting, conflict, and character, that may not fit properly under any head, or which possibly fit under both form and subject.

In this particular story, Forster has focused attention upon an instant of revelation as we are shown a character at the moment of change. The protagonist comes to a realization of truth that has been hidden from him before. The same thing holds, of course, for "The Lottery," although it is a different kind of truth that is recognized in that story.

That this revelation is never actually mentioned is proof that subject may involve more than what is narrated on the surface of a story. Sometimes that "something more" is in the form of symbolic or allegoric meaning. Here the author has elected to present this revelation through an allegorical instance rather than through one which, like "The Lottery," makes at least a pretense of reality.

Even the slowest student will recognize that "The Other Side of the Hedge" has a deeper meaning than the surface events and that the author has used symbolism to convey this meaning. They will also recognize the allegory but may not see the way in which the traditional allegoric use of the road is reversed. Most will probably be familiar with the biblical idea of the strait and narrow path which leads to heaven, a path which, unlike this, is difficult to remain on but has a well-defined heavenly goal for those who persevere.

A discussion of specific symbols, some of which are open to more than one interpretation, should lead the student to a general understanding of the point made by the story: man has cut himself off from eternal truth by a neglected hedge of old customs and outworn ideas. The reality of life, which is hidden by the hedge, surrounds him, and he can break through the hedge to reach it any time he chooses, since time and eternity are co-existent, but most of the time he refuses even to admit that it exists at all. Struggling to make progress along the road of life, the traveler casts off "unessential equipment" that impedes his struggle to stay ahead as he competes with his fellow travelers on the way. The only drawback is that he does not know his ultimate goal, although he blindly accepts the faith that it is towards progress.

Life on the other side of the hedge may be seen by some as restored innocence, a return to the Garden of Eden, where life is lived for its own sake and activity indulged in for the pleasure that it brings, rather than because it leads to something else. Time has no more meaning, other people are accepted for themselves, there is nothing to fear, and all striving has ceased. This is a rather generalized statement of the meaning of the other side; let us however emphasize again that the meaning will probably be different to different students with different backgrounds, different concepts of an ideal life. And any interpretation which can be supported by the details of the story is a correct interpretation, as correct as the one given here and any other one suggested by the teacher. The truth stands clearly revealed in the story, however it may be interpreted.

This story presents an unusual opportunity for discussion of methods by which symbolic meaning may be communicated. Some of the symbols are determined by literary tradition: the use of the road to mean life is, of course, an established convention which students may have seen in Frost's "The Road Not Taken," Pilgrim's Progress, and other journey literature. Forster's opening witticism about the podometer provides insurance against any possible misunderstanding of the meaning of the road. The podometer, usually used to measure miles walked along a road, is used here to measure years passed on the road of life.

As conventional as the road although less obvious is the significance of the dip in the water, symbolic of baptismal rebirth and purification. One clue that the water is symbolic is that falling into a moat is unnecessary to the plot; even more obviously extraneous to the narrative are the ivory and horn of the gates. We can see no reason for making these of ivory and horn rather than of more conventional gate-making substances such as wood or iron until we learn that these are the mythological gates of dreams. Dreams which delude pass through the ivory gates and those which come true, through the gates of horn. So the life of the road is a deluding dream; the life of the "other side" is the true, the real life from which many diverge but to which all eventually return through the gate of horn.

But Forster did not take all of his symbols from literary tradition, from convention; the use of the hedge as a barrier between two ways of life is his own invention. Because convention does not tell us this symbol's probable meaning, it must be more carefully established through emphasis and through suggestive description. The title makes us watchful for the hedge and aware that there is another side to it; the importance of this other side is again impressed upon us by its avoidance in conversation among the travellers on the road. We know how widely separated these two ways of life are because of the difficulties the narrator has in passing through the hedge which symbolically separates them.

That the symbols have combined to form allegory might be brought home to the students by asking them whether the use of symbols resembles more that of the fables they have read or that of The Pearl. An examination of its closeness to the fable should reveal that in each the author is actually speaking of something quite separate from what he writes, using a more internally consistent set of symbols than did Steinbeck. In allegory the true subject is often not directly mentioned at all. Instead, a network of surface symbols, sometimes conventional, sometimes invented, reveals the underlying subject matter. The two (or more) levels have a one-to-one relationship: each surface feature stands for something on the level of the actual subject. And an allegoric relationship is precise, unlike some symbolic relationships, which may be only suggested and which may mean different things to different people. Many critics make careful distinction between allegoric figures and symbols; here we have merely used the term allegory as a special kind of symbolism.

The story's allegoric nature might, as we have said, be considered an aspect of its subject. Yet the fact that it is allegoric makes some elements of its form necessary. Indeed, allegory, unlike symbolism, is often spoken of as a genre, a division of the narrative mode. The allegoric narrative must be bare of any important details which do not have symbolic meaning. So the details are apt to be few: in "The Other Side of the Hedge," as in a fable, the surface story is unrealistic and unfurnished, with little or no character development. The short story generally eliminates detail which does not contribute to a mood or "total effect," but allegory is yet barer, including only detail which has underlying meaning. The details used are chosen to make not the surface but the secondary level convincing. Thus every detail mentioned about the hedge tells us something about one of the two ways of life or about the difficulty of moving from one to the other.

So it can be seen that the ancient form called allegory is actually closely related to the modern form called the short story. They are alike chiefly in that every detail is purposefully selected, resulting in few but intensely significant details. The allegory is differentiated from the short story and other storied forms by having a complete underlying network of secondary meaning, another "level" on which we can see a sort of deeper story being told. In "The Other Side of the Hedge," we can see unfolding a whole "story" about a choice between two ways of life.

The short story, on the other hand, has more specific formal requirements: it is in prose, it is of a certain length, it is limited in such elements as time elapsed and number of characters. It may make use of symbolism, but every detail is not necessarily meaningful on another level. And is "The Other Side of the Hedge" short story or allegory? It is obviously somewhere between the two--it might best be called an allegoric short story, or a short story making use of some of the conventions which developed within the genre called allegory.

Like those of allegory and sometimes of short story, the characters are as undeveloped as the setting. We know of Miss Eliza Dimblesby's perseverance only enough so that we can contrast it with the unanxious manner of the narrator's rescuer, with his fifty- or sixty-year-old face and his voice of eighteen. The narrator does of course "develop" in that he changes his opinion of the "other side," but we learn nothing about his personality which lets us know what sort of person can make the change; we have little idea what motivated him to climb through the hedge. It is important only that he did go through, showing us both sides.

Some discussion as to why Forster chose to tell his story in this manner should help the students to understand the relationship between Subject and Form. Point of View also demands some consideration. Is the narrator Forster himself? Why has he chosen to write in the first person?

The use of the first person point of view gives the reader the opportunity of experiencing the choice of ways of life with the narrator. However, it also puts the author in the difficult position of being able to actually tell nothing about what all of this means. He has to say everything through the mouth of the rather dense and unfeeling narrator. But, through hints which mean more to the reader than to the narrator who speaks them, Forster communicates to us which side of the hedge, which life, is preferable long before the truth dawns on the narrator. Thus reader and author have a companionable understanding which causes them to look down on the narrator from a detached position of greater knowledge. The reader is led to actually scorn the narrator, to feel himself to be far above this unthinking one.

The title is the first clue which leads the reader to this greater knowledge. Knowing from it that the "other side" is important, he recognizes in the ugliness of this side and the reviving "little puff of air" which passes through the hedge symptoms that the other is the better side. The fresh, green landscape and happy people of the other side plus the contrasted appearance of the two sides of the hedge itself corroborate his opinion. And he quickly realizes that this place, which leads nowhere, stands for a life of purposeless but happy enjoyment of things as they are.

This awareness beyond that of the narrator, the result of Forster's decision to tell his story through a rather stupid man's mouth, makes the reader able to see the ironic nature of several comments made by the narrator. When the narrator calls the "other side" a prison, the reader realizes that the first side, dull and dusty and bound by hedge on both sides, is the true prison. The reader knows that "science and the spirit of emulation" are indeed the "forces that have made us what we are"--those which have made the travellers of the dusty road dull, bored, bound by the concept that "progress" is the only goal. The shift of positions with the brothers provides both irony and a unifying structural tie: as the story opens, the narrator tells us that he has travelled "more wisely" than his brother and has had to leave him lying by the roadside, although of course we soon realize that anyone who has lain down and refused to plod further down the road is actually acting more intelligently. At the end, as we might have predicted, it is the brother who is ahead, who provides the strength and leadership, who gently lowers the narrator down to sleep; this too is ironic because, although expected by the reader, it is the reverse of what the narrator expects.

The mental conflict of the narrator--and presumably of the reader--is manifested here in the conflicting aspects of the two roads. It might be worth taking the time to ask the students to identify the conflicting forces at work in the story and compare them with the conflicts in Shirley Jackson's story. The message in both stories is surprisingly similar: custom has blunted the human ability to see reality. The stories are different in form and style, but both authors make effective use of irony and of a dramatic "moment of revelation."

Study Questions

1. Compare and contrast the treatment of such elements as theme, character, conflict, and the ending of this story with "The Lottery." Are similar elements found in other short stories you have read? Do these similarities show anything about what a short story is? Do the differences show anything about what allegory is?

--The objective of the question is to show that "The Other Side of the Hedge" and "The Lottery" are similar chiefly in that they have similar themes and both belong to the category "short story." But enormous differences come about because the first, unlike the second, is presented allegorically. The students should see that each shows how easily we blindly accept custom. Each stops with a sudden ending, leaving many details up in the air, as soon as this idea is completed. But they should also see that the "Hedge" characters are not real people like those in "Lottery"; instead they are sort of stick figures which stand for ideas. The conflict is not between the people as in "Lottery" but between the ideas they symbolize. "Hedge," then, is allegorical because the author is really talking not about the characters but about the ideas behind them. Both are short stories in that they are brief accounts of one incident, limiting details of character, setting, and action to those indispensable to developing the theme.

2. What is an allegory? Does this story fit into that category? Why do you think Forster chose this form for his story?

--An allegory is an extended metaphor, an abstraction in the guise of a concrete image. The characters are personifications of abstract qualities, while the action and setting are representative of the relationships among these abstractions. Only details which have underlying meaning are used, and they are chosen to make the secondary level of the story convincing. Forster probably chose allegory because in this way he could discuss ideas rather directly but still have the interesting activity of a narrative. And he may have felt that the rather philosophical ideas involved would be clearer and more convincing if they were communicated through concrete symbols rather than through an abstract philosophical essay.

3. Compare and contrast the way the road is used here with the way it is used in some of the travel and journey literature you read in the eighth and ninth grade. Does the road here have the same sort of goal as most roads which have symbolic meaning? Why does it wind around? Would you rather follow this road or the "strait and narrow" road mentioned in the Bible?

--Both roads actually lead to somewhat similar heavenly existences. But there is a quicker way to get to Forster's heaven than by following all the twists and turns of the road; one does not have to follow it to the end. Forster may be saying something about heaven and hell being in the mind, although these are certainly not the Christian heaven and hell.

4. How much do you know about the background of the protagonist? What does he do for a living? Why was he travelling alone? Where was he going? What is his name? Why are you not told these things?

--We are, of course, not told these things because they are unneccessary details, omitted in the short story. They are unneccessary because the narrator is not so much a person as a symbol for certain ideas. And they would not only take up space; they would also detract from the generalized, "everyman" nature of the narrator.

5. Compare the setting of the story with the setting of "The Lottery." Why did Forster not try to make his setting more realistic?

--Shirley Jackson takes pains to show how ordinary the scene is so that we will see how thoroughly accepted the custom of the lottery is to people much like us. Forster, on the other hand, does not wish to create an atmosphere with his setting; he uses only details which mean something on the underlying level.

6. What is the subject of "The Other Side of the Hedge"? Is it treated on more than one level? Explain your answer. What elements of conflict are present in the story? What differences do you see between life on the two sides of the hedge? Briefly state what you believe to be the theme of the story and show what makes you think so.

--These aspects are rather thoroughly discussed in the preceding analysis. The objective of the questions is to bring out individual student responses.

7. Why does the author not tell us what happened next morning when the narrator awoke? Why does he end his story so abruptly at this particular point? How does this point compare with the opening?

--The story ends here because all we need to know is that the narrator has chosen to remain on the other side. So again extraneous details are omitted. The main objective is to show the happier life to the reader, not just to the narrator. And this point is also fitting because it makes the story symmetrical in form, since the narrator laid down his brother in the first passage.

8. Who is telling the story? Why do you suppose Forster chose to tell it in the first person? How would it have changed the story to shift it to the third person point of view? Is the narrator a fictional character, or is the author himself the speaker? Give reasons for your answers.

--Again these questions are rather thoroughly answered in the analysis section on Point of View. A change to the third person would give us less sense of living the experience with the narrator and would detract from some of the irony but would on the other hand allow Forster to explain things the narrator is unable to understand.

9. Dramatic irony comes about when you, the reader, know that something a character says really means more than he thinks it does. Find examples of irony here. How has the author used irony to reveal his own attitude about the significance of life? Comment especially about the references to the narrator's brother.

--The student should realize that the strength of the irony depends on the point of view. Forster has used irony largely to show his scornful opinion of life on the road. Students will probably be able to find examples such as those mentioned in the next to last paragraph of the analysis, in addition to such things as the narrator saying he has travelled "more wisely" than his brother, who had "wasted his breath on singing"; that lying down by the road was a "temptation," something wrong; that the narrator speaks grandiosely of life with its "unknown goal," when indeed life only leads back to the "other side."

"THE CHRYSANTHEMUMS"

by John Steinbeck

This story has been selected because it satisfies all the general requirements of the short story genre, yet it is very different from Forster's story. Here the emphasis is upon human nature revealed through a specific character, Eliza. Most of the discussion, therefore, will center around character. This will necessarily include considerations of tone as we seek to determine the author's attitude toward his characters, and the way in which he influences the attitudes of the reader. We will also need to review the characters in their relation to theme and setting. Subject, Form, and Point of View will still provide the framework for our questions as we focus upon the elements unique to this story.

Reality, for Steinbeck, is the natural universe, and human nature is at its best when seen in harmony with the natural order of things. Eliza Allen is just such a wholesome character. An attractive woman of thirty-five, the wife of a Salinas Valley rancher, Eliza has the gift of "planter's hands" so that everything she touches grows and flourishes. At the beginning of the story she is shown tending her chrysanthemums on a mild winter morning, while her husband stands by the tractor talking to two men in business suits. Nothing is said about the relationship of this married couple, but through their casual conversation we glimpse mutual respect and unquestioning acceptance of each other. They plan to celebrate the sale of the steers by having dinner in town, and going to a movie afterwards, although there is just a hint that the husband would have preferred the prize fights. Eliza is repelled by the idea, and we get the feeling her husband would have been shocked if she hadn't been.

But Eliza is much more complex than perhaps even she realizes. The dynamic personality of the itinerant tinker brings to the surface of her consciousness an unsatisfied longing for a less settled way of life typified by the wandering man, sleeping at night in his wagon underneath the stars. The power that she feels surge through her as she explains to him the satisfaction of working with her hands in the earth around her plants becomes equated with an unrealized sexual attraction for this shrewd man, with "eyes full of the brooding that gets in the eyes of teamsters and of sailors." He senses her soft spot, and exploits it for his needs.

This feeling of power and strength is noticed by her husband as later they prepare to leave for dinner in town. But when Eliza spots the chrysanthemums that she had given the tinker, lying in the road where he had tossed them as soon as he was out of sight of the house, the strength leaves her, and she cries weakly "like an old woman." She says nothing to her husband of her hurt, but asks him if the fighters hurt each other very much. He is greatly surprised, and asks if she wants to go to the fights after all, but she says, "No, I don't want to go." As Steinbeck reveals to us the sensitive pride of this far from simple soul, we become conscious of the secret romantic longing for something more than the daily rounds of our own lives.

The natural setting for the story, and the descriptive detail the author has included influence our interpretation of Eliza. "It was a time of quiet and of waiting," he tells us. "The grey flannel fog of winter closed off the Salinas Valley from the sky," much as the routine of farm life limited the horizon of Eliza's world, but "across the Salinas River, the yellow stubble fields seemed to be bathed in pale cold sunshine."

"That's a bright direction. There's a glowing there," murmured Eliza as her eyes followed the departing tinker. This concept of affinity between nature and human passion permeates the story, and perhaps helps to lift it above sentimentality.

"The Hedge" is a first-person narrative, while "The Chrysanthemums" is written from the third-person point of view. Yet the narrator reveals little of himself in the first story, but in the second story we gain real insight into the nature of Eliza's character. How has Steinbeck achieved this? Why is a first-person narration not necessarily more intimate? Discuss with the students the idea of focus, and how a writer manipulates the elements of his story to achieve the effects he desires. The reader's awareness is centered on Eliza, and everything else is seen in relation to her, so that we understand her better than she understands herself.

The students might be asked to compare this treatment with Carson McCullers' handling of "The Jockey," which is also a story that focuses on character. In both stories the minor characters, although sketchy, are individual and believable, not merely representative types as in "The Lottery" or "The Other Side of the Hedge." These differences should be discussed in terms of the different purposes of the authors, so that the students may understand how each author has adapted the form of the short story to meet his needs.

"The Catbird Seat"

by James Thurber

This popular story is still being read with pleasure, even though it is well known. Familiarity has not exhausted it, nor made it trite. Obviously it possesses something more than a clever plot and verbal wit, but since our emphasis this year is on form, it would be well to begin our study of "The Catbird Seat" with a look at the structure or pattern Thurber has chosen for his narrative.

The reader is plunged into the heart of the story immediately, with no time spent on establishing Mr. Martin's past, and Mrs. Barrow's threatening activities. By avoiding a chronological pattern, Thurber is able to keep the focus directly on Mr. Martin, so that the protagonist's character emerges as he carries out his plan, rather than through a preview of scenes that would have had no direct bearing upon the events leading up to the "rubbing out." Even though Mr. Martin is not telling his own story in a first-person narrative, Thurber has been careful to ensure that we view current actions as Mr. Martin is viewing them. By deliberately narrowing the focus of his story, Thurber has used compression to increase the force of the impact upon the reader, thus turning to his artistic advantage one of the limitations of the short story form.

The story begins with Mr. Martin having reached a decision. Since his own survival is at stake, he has committed himself to "rubbing out" Mrs. Barrows, although when at last he finds himself face to face with her, he has no idea how to go about it. As we have begun to suspect, he is incapable of physical violence. Mr. Martin has been revealed to us through Thurber's use of flashbacks, as well as through revealing detail. In this way we have also learned all we need to know about Mrs. Barrows, and about F and S and Mr. Fitweiler.

A week has elapsed between the decision to "rub out" Mrs. Barrows and the purchase of the pack of Camels, so it seems perfectly normal that Mr. Martin should review in his mind his justification and his plan of action. During the mental trial, as Mr. Martin presents the evidence, we learn the necessary details about that "horrible person," Mrs. Barrows, and the way she has shaken up the faithful employees at F and S during the time she has enjoyed sitting in the "catbird seat." Meanwhile, the hounded and desperate Mr. Martin, "drinking a glass of milk," demands the death penalty as he sums up the evidence. The flashbacks are presented dramatically, with the use of direct comment. Some of the details are reported as hearsay from Miss Paird or Old Roberts, but all are mingled with details of the present moment ("a gavel rapped in Mr. Martin's mind"), so that even though Mr. Martin is reviewing the past in the sanctuary of his own apartment, there is a prevailing sense of immediacy through this section of the story.

A closer look at some of the details of the opening paragraph will serve to show how carefully Thurber has organized his story. Mr. Martin buys the pack of Camels, not just a pack of cigarettes. This detail alerts us that the purchase is a planned one, for a purpose we do not yet know. The fact that he buys the cigarettes in "the most crowded cigar store on Broadway" also makes us guess that he has chosen a crowded place for a good reason. As the narrative progresses, our guess is confirmed. Mr. Martin is anxious not to be noticed. Then we are told that Mr. Martin "did not smoke and never had." The mystery deepens.

Next we learn more of Mr. Martin's character. His efficiency and thoroughness in his job are stressed, and the obsession with which he views his problem with Mrs. Barrows is made unmistakably clear to the reader. The more we learn of Mr. Martin's character, the less likely he appears to be the kind of person who would "rub out" anyone. The pivotal scene, which we have already mentioned, follows, when Mr. Martin, sipping his milk, quietly reviews his plans for murder.

From here to the end of the story, the plot moves forward chronologically to the final dethronement of Mrs. Barrows, and the ascent of Mr. Martin to the "catbird seat," but not before we reach a point when Mr. Martin's predicament as a would-be murderer, and Thurber's predicament as an author, both appear to be incapable of solution. Having gained entry into Mrs. Barrow's apartment, Mr. Martin searches for a weapon, but rejects everything at hand. We know without a doubt the deed will never be done. He has reached the point of no return, and is desperately casting around for an effective exit when a flash of inspiration shows Mr. Martin the way out. The utter absurdity of his present position is itself the answer. Who in the world would ever believe the little "milktoast" capable of such an outrage? All he had to do was resume his normal role next morning, and Mrs. Barrow's fantastic charges would be met with utter disbelief. As Mrs. Barrows herself realized, "My God. It's really too perfect!"

The author's words in the next paragraph, "and therein lay the cunning of his scheme" are ironically appropriate because therein lies also Thurber's genius in the handling of his plot. The ending is perfect, artistically and psychologically. A chronological narration would have failed to create and sustain the dominant mood of the story, but the plot, balanced as it is on the pivotal point of the central action, quickens the pace, arouses interest, and builds suspense.

Unlike the characters in "The Other Side of the Hedge" which are little more than personifications of abstract qualities, the characters in "The Catbird Seat" assume a greater importance. At least part of the pleasure is derived from Thurber's play of character upon character. There is the universal appeal of the triumph of the underdog; further, Mr. Fitweiler, their employer,does not understand either Mrs. Barrows or Mr. Martin, and the latter uses this situation to his own advantage. Irony and cross purposes are at the very core of the story.

Although Mr. Martin will never be the same again, he must appear to others to be unchanged. His triumph is of necessity a private one. Both the cause and the reward of his success is isolation.

Pure humor is difficult to sustain, which is one reason for the dearth of humorous novels. "The Catbird Seat" could not have been even a page longer without losing the light touch. Thurber has diverted us with a lavish use of contrast, beginning with the meek, unobtrusive Mr. Martin plotting an outrageous crime. The commonplace and the extravagant are placed in absurd juxtaposition throughout the story--the cautious little man and the romping circus horse; the glass of milk in the hand of a would-be murderer; the casual purchase of cigarettes while the mind plans to "rub out" another human being.

Style and tone are aspects of writing that students sometimes find difficult to discuss, but this story is so dominated by the tone, and by the Thurber style, that they should be able to see quite readily how they reflect the author's attitude or point of view towards his subject--human relationships. Subject, Form, and Point of View are so closely interrelated here that it is impossible to separate them.

"The Jockey"

by Carson McCullers

Students will note that in "The Jockey" as in "The Chrysanthemums," character is stressed. Both stories tell a real, a dramatic story, yet both stories are a study in human loneliness as well. But in general "The Jockey" will offer a sharp contrast to the other stories read previously. If students can see that, despite the sharp differences in form found in "The Lottery," "The Other Side of the Hedge," and "The Jockey," they all share certain important similarities, and all fall well within the basic definition of the genre, they will have grasped the major point being made in the first group of stories.

This story is written on two levels, one real and dramatic, the other poetic and symbolic. One subject is of course the encounter in the restaurant between the jockey and the three diners. Here Carson McCullers has written with the realist's strict regard for appearance and sense experience. Yet the jockey, a misfit, dwarfed, "different," is also a symbol of the essential loneliness, the isolation of the human spirit, and thus the author is also concerned with meaning and value. The loneliness of the jockey, who has lost his friend and fellow jockey, is a variation of the theme present in most of Miss McCuller's work.

Since we are at present primarily concerned not only with what a short story is, but also how the author has used or manipulated the form to his or her best advantage, it might be well to note in passing that the author has created in this short story the same effect that she has worked out in greater detail in her novel The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter. There with a variety of people she allowed the theme, as in a musical composition, to appear and disappear, as in incident after incident, and with infinite variation, she captured the essential isolation of the human spirit. Yet in "The Jockey" she uses one incident and one only for her "moment of revelation." Like Mansfield in "The Garden Party" (and Chekhoo before her) the author has created the impression of life continuing irrevocably beyond the printed page. The least possible violence has been done to life itself.

But how has the author altered the form to suit her own purposes? In "The Lottery" the students saw how the use of allegory or parables made it possible to slant the story sharply toward theme and thus to allow the author to focus, not on character or on setting, but on symbol and idea. In "The Jockey" the author focuses closely on character. Our eyes seldom leave the jockey from the moment he arrives on the scene, until, minutes later, he casts his final epithet and swaggers stiffly out of the dining room. When we do leave the jockey, we focus on the other three characters, the "rich man," Sylvester the trainer, and Simmons the bookie. Nothing occurs but a few remarks between Bitsy Barlow and the three men, and the student at this point may well ask, as he no doubt has earlier in the unit about other stories, "Is this faction?" If this is a story, then, not only must the characters be believable, but there must be a larger human significance above and beyond the immediate encounter. Therefore the students will want to ask themselves; what does the story mean? Only a close look at what is said and how it is said will answer the question.

The first three paragraphs are used for a dramatic presentation of Bitsy. We realize, however, the importance of the three men to the jockey almost immediately. When he spots the three, his dwarfed body grows rigid and his hands stiffen "so that the fingers curl inward like gray claws." Students should note, too, that when the scene shifts to the diner, it is for a purpose. We need to be told what it is that ails Bitsy. The reaction of the three is revealing. The meaningless "That's a pity" of the rich man, and the attitude of Sylvester tell us a good deal.

Against this backdrop of jovial, well-heeled merry-makers ("They claim that in August, Saratoga is the wealthiest town per capita in the world...") and the general holiday hysteria, the jockey's strained, gray face, with its "pinched, crepy eyes" stands out starkly as he approaches the table and sits down, uninvited. Students might note that it is the word "reasonable" that inflames the jockey at the beginning, and that occasions his final outburst. His friend has, in a sense, been destroyed; he will not ride again, and yet here are these three, feasting amid the merry-makers. Bitsy Barlow, perceiving something of the way the rich, the gamblers, the bookies, even the trainers, use and forget the jockey, centers his anger on the food and his eyes sweep over the table with contempt.

Students might note here the part the food plays in the story and compare it to the food mentioned in "The Garden Party" when they come to that story. There food helps to create an atmosphere of wealth, luxury, and later, Laura's mother, with heartless insensitivity, suggests that her daughter take it to the bereaved family in the cottage. ("Such a treat for the children.") To Bitsy Barlow the food is something more than a symbol of insensitivity; it symbolizes the opulence of the world of racing that finds young Irish jockeys by the name of McGuire expendable. Yet "The Jockey" is not a story of social protest. Its theme is more basic than that. The encounter between the jockey and the three diners bespeaks something more fundamental to man's nature--his inability to understand another's loneliness and his insensitivity to another's pain. Students perhaps should also note the loneliness of Eliza in Steinbeck's "Chrysanthemums." While the stories are completely different, there is a point of similarity that will help in understanding both. For Steinbeck, surely, was commenting harshly on the unsensitivity of man, too. The peddler tossed away the chrysanthemums carelessly--and much else besides.

It is the food, which the author has called our attention to before, that finally becomes overpoweringly offensive to Bitsy Barlow. The last admonition ("Be reasonable!") is too much. "His hand reached out--and deliberately he put a few French fried potatoes in his mouth. He chewed slowly---." Bitsy's contempt, as he spat out the potatoes on the rich red carpet, found voice. "Libertines! You libertines!"

But it is the larger significance of Bitsy's final remark that lingers with the reader. One of Shirley Jackson's points in "The Lottery" was that men seldom care about another's trouble. And Bitsy is discovering that truth here, anew.

Point of view, as well as character, is enormously important in "The Jockey." Since this story is somewhat "out of proportion," too (just as "The Lottery" was), slanting heavily towards character, attitudes which reveal ideas are of fundamental importance. As if she were working with stage lighting, Carson McCullers highlights some characteristics, subdues others, so that the final picture reveals what she wants us to see. She "shapes" our attitutie toward the jockey and the three diners. Students should note that the "rich man" is not referred to by name. Why? She uses all the sharp contrasts possible between the gaiety of the dining room ("Awash with drunken voices") and the drawn tired presence of the jockey. Absolutely without the use of sentimentality, she engages our sympathies at once.

We do not see into our characters' minds; we are privileged only to hear what they say, what they do, and how they look while saying it. This objectivity is essential to the author in accomplishing what she set out to do. The students, however, might want to ponder whether or not it could have been done differently. They might enjoy considering the possibility of turning this into a dramatic sketch. What would need to be "played up" if the audience were to "receive" the author's message?

If the students can see that Carson McCullers captures in this brief encounter between a jockey and three diners what a novelist might well have expanded into several hundred pages without saying more, they will perhaps understand what a short story really is; certainly such a self-discovery would be a more meaningful experience than reading a dictionary definition or an essay on the subject. For "The Jockey", not being either particularly complex or particularly simple, is an excellent illustration of those phrases we so often connect with a story: "sudden unforgettable revelation of character," "glimpse of truth," "capture of a moment in time."

"The Masque of the Red Death"
By Edgar Allen Poe

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of Poe's story is its elaborate and stylized setting. Approximately three-fourths of the story is devoted to description of visual detail. Carefully he shuts out the "real" world, just as the Prince and his companions do, and within the sealed walls of the abbey constructs the world of the story.

The setting is generally medieval, but has no reality in a geographical or timely sense. Characterization exists only to the extent that the Prince may be characterized by his taste and his surroundings. The figures of the story are stylized figures of a dance, or masque, masked literally by their costumes, and by the stylized description as well, which reveals nothing of the peculiarities of character we usually associate with individual human beings.

Certainly the apparatus of the story is highly decorative. And in a sense, we may accept the story as we might a ballet, for the brilliance of its costumes, its props, and for the movements of its dancers. But the medieval setting, the dance, as of life and death, the figure of death itself, and the de-personalization of characters and setting, suggest allegory; it is natural to see the seven apartments, the revellers, the plague, the clock, as symbols of something else. If the evert subject of the story is the futile effort of a group of people to avoid catching the plague, then these essentials of the plot may provide the first subject for symbolic interpretation, from which subtler or more detailed interpretations of symbols and meaning may be derived.

These people are isolated, cut off from all the rest of the world. It is a well used convention, the isolation of a segment of society. We are familiar with stories in which a group is stranded by some disaster, or takes a journey together, or is held captive in some way in a house or a town. Usually we find that characters thus isolated represent a variety of kinds of people, as, for example, in the conventional war story where a unit of men is found to be composed of the mother's boy, the Brooklyn tough, the negro, and so on. That is, the isolated group becomes a microcosm representing the total world from which it is taken. In Poe's story we have no such delineation of individual character. Nevertheless, we may see the Prince and his companions as mankind. That they try to shut themselves off from the outside world where the plague takes its toll, may further mean that they are mankind, engrossed in pastimes, trying to forget or shut out death, which finally overtakes them.

But many elements of the story lend themselves to varying interpretations--the use of color and light for example. Aside from the black room with its blood red windows, distinctly suggestive of death, no definite meaning can or need be correlated with the colors of the other rooms. We may say that white makes us think of purity, but there is no justification for this association within the story. That Poe makes death "happen" in the black room supports our association of black death, but no specific event takes place, say, in the green or purple rooms. Whatever color associations we bring to the story must, in part, be purely subjective. We may even guess that Poe had some such subjective associations with certain colors that caused him to color the rooms so, but knowledge of this is not necessary to an understanding of the story. The progression of the rooms is from east to west, suggestive of the sun's movement from dawn to nightfall, in turn suggestive of man's movement through life from birth to death. Perhaps it is sufficient to see the colors as the multi-hued quality of life. But what do we make of the absence of any but artificial light? Have the dancers shut themselves away from the light of reality, that is, the light of the sun which marks the passing of days, years, time, or are the lighted braziers themselves reality colored and distorted by the windows through which they glow?

The clock obviously marks the passing hours and recalls to the revellers the imminence of death. It is like the hourglass carried by the conventional figure of "Father Time," and time is always "running out." The clock also serves as a unifying device--its striking punctuates the story; and it creates a feeling of suspense, a consciousness of time passing in what is otherwise really a static picture. The story moves toward the clock, and the clock is the center of the action and the setting. Within the country there is a walled abbey; within the abbey there is a suite of rooms; within the rooms are the whirling dancers who enter at the east end move, finally, to the west and final black room, where the ebony clock marks time. Thus is the plot integral with the form; description becomes the telling of the story.

The Gothic elements of the story reach their greatest intensity when the revellers realize that the garments of the intruder are "untenanted by any tangible form." We may say that death is literally among them; that is, they have caught the plague and die of it. Moreover, they have come face to face with death in that they realize its inevitability; perhaps Poe is saying that no man really acknowledges death until he comes to the end of his own life, as the dancers come to the final, black apartment; the clock stops, the flames go out.

There are certain problems inherent in both the allegory and the Gothic tale, and in a sense it is in the combination of both elements that Poe has solved these problems. If this is an allegory, is he making a moral statement? Certainly he is making a comment on man's attitude toward his death. But this comment itself is a conventional one. It is, as in a medieval allegory, a re-statement of the theme of memento mori. But Poe gives us no real reason, Christian or otherwise, why we should remember death, and so this is essentially no moral tale. It is an entertainment, in the Gothic tradition, and its horrors are intended to satisfy in the way that ghost stories do. The symbolic meaning gives stature and substance to the purely entertaining or "thrilling" Gothic tale, and the latter gives interest and impact to the former.

That the story is told by an unidentified first person narrator is a curious touch. Practically speaking, everyone in the story dies, so why have it told by someone who couldn't possibly have been there to know what happened? Whereas the first person narrator is often employed to give credibility to a story, here Poe seems to employ this mode of narration to do just the opposite. "In an assembly of phantasms such as I have painted," says the narrator. Whether or not we are to identify the "I" with Poe is irrelevant. The "I" is a storyteller, a painter of "phantasms," and this tale is his art. He is neither preacher nor reporter, and yet this mention of the "I" seems almost to place the story in the category of an entertainment, told after supper, perhaps, or on an evening around the fire. And this seems to relieve the allegory, in part, of the necessity of imparting a moral lesson.

Within the story itself, the stylization of allegory is at once relieved and heightened by the confrontation between the Prince and the intruder. When Poe says, "Even with the utterly lost, to whom life and death are equally jests, there are matters of which no jest can be made," he strikes an entirely human note. We sense insult, horror, embarrassment perhaps, a sudden sense of discomfort that runs through the crowd beholding this stranger in his tasteless and revolting costume. But the last gesture of protest is futile, and the story concludes with a pronouncement that is both factual and ceremonial.

"The Minister's Black Veil--A Parable"
By Nathaniel Hawthorne

It would be difficult to state the intention of Hawthorne's story more succinctly than it appears in the title, "The Minister's Black Veil--A Parable." As a parable, the story points a lesson or moral, in the form of allegory. The veil is the key symbol of the allegory.

There is no real obscurity in the meaning of the veil, for the minister interprets its meaning on his deathbed. He calls the veil a symbol of man's deceptions behind which he hides his sinful nature. Although "the cause of so much amazement may appear sufficiently slight," we may accept the story as a parable and in its own setting. That is, in a more modern and secular context we might find both the action and the idea of the story unacceptable or unbelievable. Even if we believe that a minister might act in this peculiar way, we may doubt that the reactions of people to him would be sustained over his lifetime. If the reader sees Hopper as a mere eccentric or crank, and the story simply as a tale of odd behavior, then the story fails. But as a parable, and in the context of a somewhat romantic puritanism, the story has its own validity. That is, we see this as a church-oriented community, with Mr. Hopper as its spiritual leader. And since the purpose of a parable is to give a moral or lesson, we expect that only those details or actions which demonstrate that lesson will be presented For example, nothing is told about the lives of characters except that which pertains to Hopper's wearing of the veil.

The parishioners react in various representative ways. Some do not believe the minister is the same person with his face covered. All are unsettled by it. They feel he has become something horrible by hiding his face. Some think he is mad. Some are awed. Some feel that by covering his face, the minister is able to see their secret weaknesses. They want to laugh, talk loudly, forget the veil, after they leave church and Hooper's presence. There are those practical sorts who attribute it to weak eyes. While some wish to avoid the minister, so as not to be associated with the horror he portends, others go out of their way to pass in front of him, as if daring evil. Most feel that the influence of the veil extends to his whole person. The superstitious look for signs of supernatural powers, such as the shuddering corpse. Although they will not ask him about it, all gossip behind his back. Some refuse to see any significance in it and try to explain the veil as an eccentric whim. That is, everyone manages through rationalization, ignorance, or other means, to avoid facing the lesson the minister wishes to teach.

Hawthorne uses example after example to build a picture of the reaction to the veil. By use of numerous and varying examples he gives the impression that all of society is represented here. And this accumulation of detail builds to and prepares for the minister's deathbed speech.

Central problems of the story include sustaining interest while preaching a lesson, credibility, giving the illusion of "life" when ideas are the subject, and dealing with the scope of a lifetime in a short piece of writing. The numerous brief sketches of characters, the "love interest" involving the minister's fiancee, Gothic elements related to the mysterious and suspenseful atmosphere of the story, and the delayed revelation of the meaning of the veil itself, are all used to build and hold the reader's interest. That abstractions are embodied in characters, objects, or actions gives life and concreteness to the ideas Hawthorne is dealing with.

Time in the story is marked by such expressions as, ". . . . years wore on . . . . ," by noting the gray hair of "Father Hooper," by mentioning, in passing, events of the man's life, and other similar devices. Death marks time throughout, beginning with the girl's funeral, the mention of the death of parishioners as time passes, and finally Hooper's own death. His lifetime is presented only in relation to the veil, and in each scene from his first appearance with it at the church to the deathbed, it plays a prominent part, and consequently gives unity as well as meaning to the story. Another unifying device is the appearance of Hooper's fiancee twice, early in the story and at Hooper's deathbed. Her two appearances frame the interim, and show that time has gone the full circle of a lifetime.

Since the story has a didactic purpose, the Gothic elements are not intended merely to provoke emotion per se, but to sway the reader, to move him to accept the moral the story puts forth.

But so strong are such elements in the atmosphere of the story, and particularly at the conclusion, that we may wonder whether imaginative and romantic interests finally dominate didactic ones. Certainly the deathbed scene seems, up to a point, purely melodramatic. "Never!" cries Hooper, "On earth, Never!" in response to the clergyman who tries to remove the veil. ". . . and there he sat, shivering with the arms of death around him . . ." Perhaps it is Hooper's faint, sad smile" with its touch of irony that saves this final scene. Then too, there is the minister's final sermon which holds our interest as we await the revelation of the veil's meaning. Finally, it should be noted that this dramatic (or melodramatic) mode of expression may be particularly suitable to Hooper, who is, after all, a minister, whose life work is preaching. We may see his whole life as a prolonged sermon, acted out, to which the deathbed speech is the conclusion.

But the story makes a general statement about human nature which, perhaps, supersedes any specific doctrines regarding sin and virtue with which Hawthorne is dealing. This statement hinges on the irony that people reacted more strongly to the veil itself than to the ideas it represented. We may extend this to say that people embody their real fears, doubts, or problems, in objects or situations which in themselves have little or no significance. For example, some people may fear a corpse, when it is really death which frightens them. Both book-burning and witch-burning represent a kind of rationalization by which people exorcise intangible fears in the form of tangible objects which are not, in themselves, the real objects of fear. In Hawthorne's story, one of the characters claims to have seen a corpse shudder at the sight of Hopper's black veil; and this is a projection of the character's own reaction into an external object. Perhaps Hawthorne is saying that in this way people avoid facing the real issues of their lives, just as Hooper's parishioners directed their reactions at the veil, in itself a harmless object, and avoided facing what it represented.

If we agree that Hawthorne intends this ironical statement, then there is justification in concluding that the last lines of the story are more than a mere Gothic device to arouse awe and terror. ". . . good Mr. Hooper's face is dust; but awful is still the thought that it mouldered beneath the Black Veil!" There is no real reason why the decay of Hooper's face should be more "awful" beneath the veil than without it, but ironically the veil itself remains the object of men's fear and awe.

"The Garden Party"
By Katherine Mansfield

Katherine Mansfield's "The Garden Party" is, essentially, a story about growing up: a young girl sees death closely for the first time. While the principal emphasis in the story is on the revelation of character, the students will actually be able to see here, probably better than elsewhere in this study of short stories, the subtle blending of subject, form, and point of view into an integrated whole. In "The Lottery" and in "The Other Side of the Hedge," students were primarily concerned with those elements of the story that are unique to it as a genre; in "The Catbird Seat," "Chrysanthemums," and in "The Jockey," they noted how the author of a short story could, and did, alter the form to suit his purpose, how he might slant his story rather heavily toward setting, plot, or character and by so doing alter the meaning of the story. In "The Garden Party," which is a superb example of the genre, students can see that the setting and atmosphere actually are part and parcel of the subject. What story would exist without the carefully created upper-class setting, the house high on a hill above the mean cottages? What story would there be if the joyous, light-hearted, sun-drenched world of garden parties and youth, the atmosphere of carefree happiness so carefully cultivated in the early paragraphs were no longer part of the story? Neither can point of view be separated, for the principal conflict in "The Garden Party" grows out of attitudes--attitudes dealing with garden parties and death. Therefore, the student will have an excellent opportunity to see anew that how something is said is part of what is said.

To begin with, let us consider the setting. The house, symbolically situated at the top of a steep rise overlooking the workers' cottages, is elegant, luxurious. It is surrounded by hundreds of roses, and lawns that the gardener had not only mowed, but swept. There are "kitchen regions," a drawing-room, even a smoking room. A marquee is to be erected, not on the tennis court, but in front of the karakas trees. Such a rich upper-class setting produces a corresponding atmosphere in the story, and this atmosphere is subtly reinforced by the author's description of a morning in the life of these people who take luxury for granted. Note such details as the hiring of four men to erect the marquee, the band which is to play for the party, and the household staff--gardener, cook, servants. The sunny weather is paralleled by the gay attitude of Mrs. Sheridan and her three daughters. Here, for example, is Laura going to give directions for raising the marquee: "Away Laura flew, still holding her piece of bread-and-butter. It's so delicious to have an excuse for eating out of doors . . ." And later, talking to her brother, "she ran at Laurie and gave him a small, quick squeeze. 'Oh, I do love parties, don't you?' gasped Laura." Jose sings her mournful song, and then she breaks into a "brilliant, dreadfully unsympathetic smile." Despite the minor problems involved in arranging the garden-party, life in the Sheridan household is joyful and carefree. Out of this carefree, upper-class setting Laura emerges to confront the realities of death, poverty, and grief.

Since this story is essentially a character study, point of view, in its many ramifications, is of great importance. Technically the narrative method Mansfield has used is that of the omniscient narrator, but the student will note that he is almost always with Laura, looking outward at her world, or looking inward discovering with her the complexities of existence. We note that, although she is a creature of her world and its comforts, she responds intuitively out of a generous and sympathetic nature to the news that a workingman from the cottage below has been killed. We are not unprepared for her sensitivity: We remember now the incident of the workingman and the lavender, her delight over the canna lilies, her being the "artistic" one. Laura does not hesitate nor pause when she hears the news; she flies at once first to her sister (. . . "however are we going to stop everything?") and then to her mother, who is aghast ("not in the garden!").

Neither Mrs. Sheridan nor Jose comprehend. Their attitude is not consciously selfish or cruel; it is simply indifferent. The world outside their circle of friends and acquaintances is non-existent and thus incomprehensible. Once again we think of the peddler in "Chrysanthemums," of the three diners in "The Jockey," and of Mrs. Hutchinson's soft laughter as she joined the lottery crowd. The inability to comprehend another's pain, the lack of imaginative insight into other worlds than one's own is one of the points Katherine Mansfield is dealing with. We grow increasingly sure as we read just what the author's attitude is, but we are spared the sentimentality Miss Mansfield could so easily have supplied. It was not a particularly easy thing to do, to have a girl, scarce more than a child, encounter death, discover and accept reality, and stay free of the sticky depths of sentimentality. But it was managed.

After the party Mrs. Sheridan hits on the plan of sending the left-overs to the bereaved family. Only Laura protests at the inappropriate offering, but she obeys her mother, and sets out to take the basket to the Scotts. Laura confronts more than death there. She also sees that while not all the inhabitants of the cottage are ignoble, neither are they noble. The sister of the widow is unpleasantly humble. But the encounter with the ultimate reality in the cottage--death--leaves her suddenly overwhelmed with the awful complexities of life, life that held both "this marvel that had come to the lane" and the world of garden parties. The alien worlds had collided, and the collision had brought to Laura sudden recognition, bewildering but comforting, inexplicable but true; life held tinkling spoons and canna lilies, sorrow and death, people who cared, and people who didn't.

In order to bring the two worlds together for Laura, Katharine Mansfield manipulated the elements of the story with extraordinary sensitivity. The plot itself is all but non-existent. It is the subject--character revelation-- that emerges. Setting and atmosphere are inseparable from that subject, and it is the point of view, the subtle interactions between daughter and mother, between Laura and workingmen, between Laura and the guests that reveal the theme.

But there is another aspect of this story we have not yet touched on-- that of class distinctions. It is not as important a theme as that of Laura's development of character, yet it is not a minor theme, and it recurs throughout the story. We must not forget the setting--the rich splendid house on top of the rise--and, in the valley below, the "little mean dwellings painted a chocolate brown" from which "the very smoke coming out of their chimneys was poverty-stricken." Furthermore, there is to be a garden-party, certainly not a diversion of the poor, the lower classes. Laura is aware of such distinctions from the very beginning, when she discusses raising the marquee with the workmen. At first she is uneasy with them but their friendliness quickly wins her over, even to the point that she would rather "have workmen for friends than the silly boy she danced with." And she puts the blame squarely in the right place: "It's all the fault', she decided . . . . 'of these absurd class distinctions.'" She goes on to say that she does not feel these distinctions, but she obviously does; she has been bred to recognize such distinctions as a matter of course, and to recognize her high place on the social ladder.

The class distinctions are emphasized even more strongly as a result of Laura's reaction to the carter's death. Jose will not have the party stopped for the death of what she calls a "drunken workman"--one can almost see her thinking that anyone of that class killed in such a manner would certainly be drunk; Mrs. Sheridan reacts in her condescending manner: "'I can't understand how they keep alive in those pokey little holes,'" and "'people like that don't expect sacrifices from us.'" And later, when Laura is to bring the flowers, Mrs. Sheridan remarks that "'people of that class are so impressed by arum lilies.'"

There is a conflict between mother and daughter over these class distinctions, although Laura does not fully realize it. Her attempts to do the right think are always met by rebuffs, but in the end her naturally sympathetic character achieves the sort of victory which her mother could not possibly take away from her: Laurie asks her if her visit to the dead man's house was awful: "'No,' sobbed Laura. "It was simply marvellous.'"

"For Esmé--With Love and Squalor"
By J. D. Salinger

"For Esmé--With Love and Squalor" concerns the wartime meeting between an American soldier and a young English girl and her little brother. Their meeting comprises most of the first portion of the story. When we next see the soldier, in the latter part of the story, he is shattered by the experience of war, a nervous and physical wreck, but a letter from the girl, along with her gift of her father's watch and love and kisses from her little brother, make a human contact with the broken man and mark the beginning of his recovery.

The form of the story is peculiar in that it is a story, or two stories, within a story. In fact, it is also a story about writing a story, for it tells how it came to be written, and the telling, the subject, and the background are all part of the whole. The basic events of the narrative occurred some time in the past, as we know by the beginning. The girl, in her early teens during the teashop encounter, is now about to be married. Salinger thus makes the story an occasional piece, celebrating Esmé's wedding by the soldier's memory of and tribute to her.

There are then three different times in the story, the present when the story is being told, the past when the narrator met Esmé, and the past when he received her letter. The story moves from the present to the furthest past, then forward, and then, by implication though not in the actual narrative, to the present again. Since we are given what might have been the "happy ending" to start with, interest is shifted from that to the unfolding of what came before.

Another peculiarity of the story is that it changes from first person narrative to third person, in which Sergeant X is the central figure. There is no difficulty in identifying Sergeant X as the "I" of the first part, nor is there intended to be. To a certain extent it may be charged that this shift in point of view disrupts the story's unity and merely adds artificial complexity. That Esmé asked the "I" of the story to write a story for her, may seem merely a weak justification of the story's existence, an attempt at verisimilitude which is unnecessary and cumbersome.

But the subject of the story is the revitalization of a broken and alienated man. If we consider that the speaker, as he appears in the introduction and in the first portion considers himself a "whole" man, and that Sergeant X is not, then there is some justification for divorcing Sergeant X from his identity with the narrator. In this way, form parallels content. That is, when the narrator was Sergeant X, he was not himself; looking back with objectivity acquired by time, the narrator sees Sergeant X as a pitiable, neurotic, deeply hurt man. Sergeant X is alienated not only from humanity, but from the healthy, whole character who is the narrator as well. Moreover, had the first person narration been maintained throughout, the character of the "I" would have been weakened. We can imagine the difficulties had he been forced to say, of himself, "I felt my mind dislodge itself and teeter...."

Another accusation might be made that Sergeant X's breakdown is insufficiently substantiated. Thousands of soldiers went through the same experience as he. Is he merely a weakling, or is he deserving of our respect and concern? But Salinger places Sergeant X in sharp contrast to several other characters. The older brother writes asking for war souvenirs, as if the war were a carnival. Corporal Z is blatantly unconcerned with the horrors of war and interested only in his girl back home, getting to wear an Eisenhower jacket, senselessly killing a cat. This mention of the cat episode shows Corporal Z as a man who has formed the wartime habit of killing, of destruction without cause or conscience. That Sergeant X is revolted by the act shows that he has retained his sensitivity. Along with his pseudo-psychologist girlfriend, Corporal Z refuses to acknowledge that X's condition could be a result of the war. "She says nobody gets a nervous breakdown just from the war and all. She says you probably were unstable like, your whole goddam life." This man's solution to suffering is Bob Hope.

In contrast, Sergeant X's sensitivity to suffering and brutality is delineated by his reaction to the inscription in the Nazi woman's book: "Dear God, life is hell." He adds to this, "Fathers and teachers, I ponder 'What is hell?' I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love." And this is why he has broken; the war has taken his capacity for human love.

But Esmé's letter provides the necessary touch of humanity for his rehabilitation. This is not romantic love. Esmé's youth, and such details as her greeting to X's wife in the letter, preclude this possibility. She is associated with her little brother, and so we see her as a mature child rather than a woman. And yet in her role of a woman-like child, she is the ideal giver of healing love, which is both innocent and wise. What she gives Sergeant X is the possibility of loving concern between human beings everywhere, which the brutality of war seemed to obliterate.

One might question whether much of the "talk" and detail might be reduced to give a tighter, more economical story. But this contributes to the sense of reality Salinger wishes to establish. This seems to be a "real" story about "real" people, and we are intrigued and convinced by it. Moreover, much of the charm of Salinger's style depends on the accuracy of his observations; although they may sometimes seem arbitrary or irrelevant, they serve to create character in depth. The narrator who would throw out a gas mask to make room for books, would also be the sort of person who later inscribes the German woman's book. Esme who sings in the church choir has her own existence outside of her contact with the narrator.

Other details reinforce thematic relationships. That the narrator's mother-in-law writes, asking him to "send her some cashmere yarn first chance I got away from 'camp'" parallels the brother's letter, in the second half. We may even extend this parallel and say that the narrator's mention, early in the story, of his mother-in-law's impending visit, shows that as a man "with all his faculties intact" he bears no grudges.

The title of the story indicates the twin themes of love and suffering, and the tribute to Esmé signs the narrator's affirmation that in spite of "squalor" love can exist.

"How Beautiful With Shoes"
By Wilbur Daniel Steele

How Beautiful With Shoes is a story of the end of innocence. For this reason, it is important that the center of consciousness resides in Amarantha; the reader knows what she knows, sees what she sees, and so is able to undergo with her, her changed perception of life.

However, the reader's awareness is not identical with that of Amarantha. She is simple, unsophisticated, obviously of sub-normal intelligence. If the story were told by Amarantha as first person narrator, her limited intelligence and awareness would place stringent limitations on what might be said by the story and how it might be said. Instead Steele employs the omniscient narrator, but confines point of view strictly to that of the girl. This effective compromise allows us to follow, almost exactly, the perceptions and experiences of the girl, but it also allows us to know more than she because we see the description, selection of detail, pattern, imposed by the omniscient narrator.

Appropriately the story takes place in the spring time. The time of birth and awakening in the countryside parallels the incipient awakening in the girl. We see her first in this context, milking, feeding pigs, going barefoot and instinctively over the turned up earth to meet her lover, Ruby. When they hug each other it is in the same way that they handle animals, and they seem, themselves, two docile dumb animals.

It is into this placid setting that the madman, Jewett, is introduced; the frantic arrival of the Ford carrying the excited searchers disrupts the tranquil atmosphere. The rest of the story is constructed upon the juxtaposition of two opposite characters, Amarantha and Humble Jewett; all other characters become background for them.

She is the simple rustic, he the educated man; she is animal, he intellect; she is the realist ("I--ain't--Blossom!") and he the dreamer; she is the docile peasant and he the revellious intellectual; she is sane, he insane; she is woman, passive, accepting, and he is man, the actor. It is this contact of opposites which brings about the change in the girl so that, at the end of the story, we find her unhappily sitting in thought, unable to remove the unaccustomed symbolic shoes which pain her. Neither can she throw off her new but painful knowledge.

The story can roughly be divided into four parts. There is the introduction where the tranquil farm life parallels the innocent state of the girl. Then there is her first encounter with Jewett which merely touches her, piques her curiosity, and stirs a sense of expectation which is yet inarticulate. This also arouses expectation in the reader, for we know that s so far nothing has actually "happened" but we expect it to. The interval between this and the third major portion, after Jewett's escape, allows for exposition. "Older Haskins had a lot of facts about the loony." Through the neighbors' gossip we begin to see Jewett as a rounded character, with background, motivation. This interval, with Mare's uneasiness and talk of Jewett's crimes, also builds suspense, and prepares for the next major portion of the story, Mare's abduction and her long night with the madman. Although we may say that she is changed in this third portion of the story, we do not really know it until the last portion, when she sits alone reflecting on what has happened. The story, then, proceeds in distinct stages, each of which marks a stage of the change which takes place in the girl.

Both the simple rustic and the madman are traditional figures of wisdom. The country person, like the child, is viewed as uncorrupted by society, and consequently sees with the clear vision of innocence. The madman, in his madness, is also freed from convention, and plays the part of the all-seeing prophet or visionary. Such characterization can easily be exploited in a sentimental and false way. But Steele carefully grounds his characters in the real and mundane. Although the girl undergoes a transformation, at the end of the story she is still somewhat lumpish, lost, and pathetic. She does not go over to Jewett's side, but contrives, by her silence, in his death. And Jewett, dying, is reduced to ". . . something twisting and bumping on the floor-boards." He is, after all, a murderer, and the everyday world cannot accommodate even visionary murderers.

It is ironic that when Mare returns, finally, to her home, the neighbors are all waiting to find if she is all right, that is, if she has been raped by Jewett. "No, it's all right," the doctor tells the men waiting outside. But none of them perceive the possibility of a different sort of violation, by which Mare's virgin intellect and sensibility have been initiated into a new consciousness.

Steele employs certain devices which may symbolically parallel this initiation. For example, the events take place through a night and into the dawn of the next (new) day. And Jewett takes Mare from the barnyard up to the heights. When she goes down again, at the end, it is indeed with a sense of let-down.

If the story makes one final statement, it is that knowledge (as opposed to innocence) does not bring happiness, and in fact, more likely the contrary, but that it is infinitely more desirable than complacent unawareness. At the summit of the hill, Humble Jewett cries, "'I've never lived!' In his single cry there were two things, beatitude and pain." Once Mare has been to the summit, has encountered Jewett and all the qualitites he represents, she cannot return unchanged to the barnyard world below. And so she too comes to realize, albeit confusedly, that she has not lived because she has been unaware, as an animal is; and while there is pain in her knowledge, she has no desire to return to her former state. She tells Ruby, "Go 'way! Go 'way! Lea' me be!"

"The Chaser"
By John Collier

John Collier's "The Chaser" depends on light irony for its success as a story. The story is very short, stripped to bare essentials, just as the room in which it takes place is stripped to the minimum of furnishings and the old man's wares. The plot is extremely simple as well; the action takes place within approximately the same time it takes to read the story, and consists primarily of only Alan's purchase of a love potion.

But it is in the implied future, outside of the actual events, that we see the irony of the situation. Alan is dazzled by the possibilities of making Diana love him with a consuming passion. He fails to see, or believe, that the old man is wiser than he and knows that when Alan gets what he wants it will not make him happy. Like any supermarket offering free orchids for the ladies, the old man's business lures customers with the one dollar love potion, but, as he himself admits, "If I did not sell love potions . . . I should not have mentioned the other matter to you."

The implications of this remark go almost unnoticed by Alan, so enchanted is he by the thought of immediate ends. But the reader is always aware of the double-edged nature of the old man's remarks, and it is this awareness which prepares us for the final irony of the old man's "Au revoir" to Alan's "Goodbye." So adept, so sure in his business, so knowing and subtle is the old man, we do not doubt that they will meet again.

Both the brevity and intentions of the story necessitate, to an extent, its form. It would have been possible for Collier to write a much longer story with the same subject by bringing in scenes with Diana, for example, or other scenes in which Alan's character is demonstrated by his actions in different circumstances. Such a story would be more concerned with motivation than this one is. Or perhaps a first-hand look at Diana would reinforce, for the reader, the old man's belief that Alan will one day return for the poison.

But such background is simply not necessary to the story as it exists. Humor may certainly be sustained at length, and even some jokes are both long and funny. But Collier has chosen to make "The Chaser," which is in its way a kind of joke, the sort of story which makes its point quickly. It suggests rather than shows, and the humorous irony depends on the quickly or suddenly realized twist. We may say that "The Chaser" has a surprise ending, but it is not a complete surprise, for the old man's remarks have consistently predicted the same thing. The surprise is not so much in anything that happens in the story, but rather in the reader's realization that what the old man says is true.

Collier employs understatement to make his point. The old man's final "Au revoir" is the epitome of this understatement. Without it, or with a simple goodbye, we might be uncertain just what the point of the story was. But if a more labored explanation had been made, the effect would have been too heavy. For example, the old man might have said, "I'll see you again sometime. Be sure of that." But the "Au revoir" allows the reader to figure something out for himself. We may even guess that Alan completely misses the significance of the farewell, and this compounds our pleasure in the irony by maintaining different levels of understanding or viewpoints, in the old man, in Alan, and in the reader.

The brevity of the story places some restrictions on character development. There is no change in either character. Each maintains his consistent viewpoint throughout, the old man's sophistication and Alan's naiveté. What change takes place occurs in the reader's perception. And yet Collier does a skillful job of sketching in characterization so far as it is necessary to the story, by letting the characters reveal themselves by what they say. We know that the old man is shrewd, realistic, a good businessman. He seems to possess a wry, objective humor, as if he enjoys knowing more than Alan. He is content in his private knowledge and does not try to force Alan to be more realistic, and yet he does not try to deceive him and definitely suggests that the love potion may not bring the happiness Alan seeks. On the other hand, Alan reveals himself by ignoring or denying the old man's suggestions. He leaves sentences unfinished and shows himself to be ill at ease, uncertain. He responds impulsively with exclamations of delight or amazement. He is romantic, idealistic, completely absorbed in his passion for Diana. We know that he is not rich because he worries about the cost, and we know that he is young. In short, Alan and the old man are balanced opposites. The third character, Diana, although she does not appear in the story, is also briefly characterized by Alan's offhand remarks about her. We know simply that she likes parties, and she is not serious about Alan; and this is all we need to know about her.

Most of the story is in the form of a dialogue, which emphasizes and allows the economy of the story. The author does not intrude with comments. Instead, except for the initial descriptive paragraphs, conversation is the vehicle for characterization, exposition, plot. While this restricts the author's comment to a certain extent, it allows the reader the conviction of first-hand observation. We are there. We hear everything that is said and draw our own conclusions. The story is much like a short play. Collier sets the scene, and then brings in the characters who speak their parts.

Since the characters are not really developed in depth, we do not become involved with them personally, and this is probably necessary to maintain the light tone. Diana, especially, is merely suggested. She is more caricature, or even less, than individual. Consequently we are not especially concerned about the possibility that she will be poisoned. And Alan seems too unaware to arouse sympathy; we do not worry about his becoming disillusioned with love. Moreover, such disillusionment or murder clearly belong to some vaguely distant future, and, as Alan does, the reader can put off unpleasant possibilities for the present. It is that ironic, humorous present that holds our attention.

Collier is commenting on human nature in several ways. He says that people do not always know what will make them happy. Then too, he seems to be saying that man can't stand too much of a good thing. And finally, he is perhaps making a comment on the nature of love between men and women, saying that in overwhelming doses it is worse than the old man's poison. But the story is a fantasy, despite its carefully realistic speech and setting. We do not really believe in love potions, and so we are free to enjoy speculating on what might happen if such a thing did exist. This blending of fantasy and realism makes a story which is humorous in a subtle, ironic way, so that we are not compelled to read into it any weighty "messages," but take it for what it is; a light-hearted joke at the expense of mankind, but one which is good-natured enough that we don't take it badly.

Since this the final story in the unit, it should be used as a point of departure for a full scale review of the importance of Form to the short story. Ask the students to compare the form Collier's story has taken with the others in the unit. Steer the discussion to emphasize that an author is confronted with several possible methods of handling his material, and the choices he makes impose certain limitations upon him. For example, Collier's choice of humor and light irony precludes any character study in depth. Allowing the reader to become involved in any way with the characters would result in tragedy, which was not the author's intention. Salinger, on the other hand, who wants his reader to accept the characters in his story as real, must give detailed attention to both situation and character. Poe and Hawthorne use symbol to express ideas. Have the students compare all the stories in the unit and lead them to understand that it is the writer's purpose which dictates the form his story will take. The skill with which he manipulates the material and moulds the form will determine the succes or failure of his attempt to achieve the result he desires.

THE SCARLET LETTER

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

(Page references are to the paperback edition Signet Classic #CD 8.)

I. Introduction

The Scarlet Letter by Hawthorne, as the first of the three novels in the eleventh grade curriculum, introduces several of the main themes of the other two novels, The Mayor of Casterbridge and The Great Gatsby. For example, in all three novels the past lives of various characters cannot be forgotten, but control, even ruin, their lives. Hester slips once into sin and is never free from her scarlet letter. Mayor Henchard loses his reputation, along with his wealth, when his wrong wife and supposed daughter appear after nearly twenty years. Gatsby wins Daisy--his dream--only to lose her and waste the rest of his life trying to recapture his dream of her.

Surely such an immediate theme as the influence of today's actions on tomorrow's destiny should appeal to the students. Many may scoff at the religious idea of sin being visited "unto the third and fourth generations," but all will see that decisions and actions of today do influence tomorrow. This causal relationship is clear in practical matters, such as educational opportunities, yet it is no less important for the individual. The concern of all three authors is the effect of a man's past, both his actions and his dreams, upon his daily life. In other words, each author presents his own view of human life and its meaning and invites the students to test their views against his.

Aside from thematic considerations, the three novels in this eleventh grade curriculum will deepen the students' appreciation of the three analytic principles of the literature curriculum: (1) subject, (2) point of view, and (3) form.

In prior years they have seen how the subject of a literary work is often complex. Even poor students should recall that Santiago in The Old Man and the Sea is more than an isolated fisherman. Better students should remember the multiple interpretations and symbolic complexities hidden by the simple surface action of Hemingway's novel. A similar work in this year's curriculum is The Scarlet Letter, which has an elaborate symbolic structure concealed beneath its surface action. Other parallels may be drawn between the points of view in earlier works and the points of view in the three novels of this year's work; for example, Huckleberry's recounting of his adventure in Huckleberry Finn should prepare the student for reading Nick's account of Gatsby's life in The Great Gatsby. Of course, the main emphasis of this year's work will be the form of the novel. A key concern will be the distinguishing traits of the romance and the novel, respectively represented by The Scarlet Letter and The Great Gatsby. But these three analytic principles defy separation, and the student should see how arbitrary these divisions are and yet how handy they are for a satisfying discussion of a novel.

II. Subject

Morals Drawn by the Narrator

One advantage of introducing this year's novel unit with The Scarlet Letter is that it has a simple surface action. For instance, most students will be able to sketch Hester's previous life in England and Amsterdam, even though the sketch must be built upon several separated references. Also, most students will surely notice the morals supplied for the various characters in the last chapter. Here the narrator draws a moral from Arthur Dimmesdale's fate: "Be true! Be true! Be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred!" (242) About Roger Chillingworth, the narrator is not so definite, yet the student will need only to summarize a key paragraph from the last chapter: The man whose life is consumed with sinful hate is lost, and when the object of this hate escapes, all that remains for him is "to betake himself whither his Master would find him tasks enough, and pay him his wages duly" (242). Hester Prynne's life, as the living proof of the statement about Dimmesdale, also allows an evident moral: Though the stain of sin is always on a person's life, the only hope for happiness, however limited, is to acknowledge the sin and live an open life before others.

Such formulations are simplifications, yet they may serve as the basis for a discussion which is more complex and which, quite possibly, will result in a rejection of the simplifications themselves. For example, varied interpretations of Hester Prynne's actions are possible. The opening scenes arouse the reader's sympathy. She has been deserted by her lover, and her husband decides not to expose himself to ridicule from the people. In Chapter 5, "Hester at Her Needle," the narrator draws in detail Hester's life and explains "that she was banished, and as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere, or communicated with the common nature by other organs and senses than the rest of human kind" (87). Her isolation pleads for sympathy. Later, in the forest meeting between Hester and Dimmesdale, "her youth, and the whole richness of her beauty" (192) returned, and the sunshine burst forth as if to bless the reunion. What reader can resist the pleasure of seeing the two lovers happy, if only for such a fleeting moment? The impact of this sympathetic portrayal of Hester is that it becomes harder and harder for the reader to accept the far from happy conclusion of her tale. His romantic spirit, nurtured by Hollywood, yearns for the lovers to live happily. But, as Leo Marx says in his introduction to the Signet edition, "If we accept her fate as true (in Hawthorne's phrase) to the laws of the human heart, then he has won his triumph over a seductive but inherently sentimental view of life" (x).

Control of the Action

Whether it is the "laws of the human heart" or abstract fate which demands the unhappy ending is open to question. In Chapter 5 the narrator explains that Hester might have fled to the forest or to Europe, but that she felt the compulsion to stay at the "scene of the crime" (83). Even more bitter is the statement that "the chain that bound her here was of iron links and galling to her inmost soul, but could never be broken" (84). If these are signs of the moral imperative which Hester's own heart imposes upon itself, then what is the explanation for her glowing appearance and buoyant feelings once she discards the scarlet letter during the forest meeting with Dimmesdale? It is little Pearl who forces Hester to replace the accursed letter on her breast, not her own inner feelings. Fate, in the guise of her child, compels her to wear the letter. In the final scene, where Dimmesdale on the scaffold confesses his hidden sin, Hester is drawn to join him "as if impelled by inevitable fate, and against her strongest will" (235). Here Hester's love for Dimmesdale would be an acceptable motivation for her action, yet the narrator chooses to credit "inevitable fate."

Determinism. This recurrence of fate as a force controlling not only Hester, but also the other characters, leads to a consideration of Christian concepts at work in the tale. There is throughout it a tension between a Puritan determinism and a tendency to overthrow, or at least modify, its harsher tenets. Time and again the narrator makes ironic comments about the strict, unreasonable harshness of New England Puritanism. For instance, in the opening scene where Hester is made to stand before the town fathers and the people, the "grim rigidity" of the people is equated with the actions which would "have betokened nothing short of the anticipated execution of some noted culprit" (57). The "noted culprit" is ironically only a defenseless woman with an innocent child at her breast. In a more serious manner, the narrator observes in a later passage that "the generation next to the early emigrants . . . so darkened the national visage . . . [that] we have yet to learn the forgotten art of gayety" (218).

Opposed to those criticisms of early Puritanism is the determinism which seems to control the main characters. Perhaps the best statement of a thorough Christian determinism is Reverend Dimmesdale's explanation of the chain of events which has led him to confess his concealed sin before the townspeople. Just before he dies he says that God arranged for the "dark and terrible old man [Roger Chillingworth] to keep the torture always at red-heat!" (239) Dimmesdale's statement, which is left unchallenged by the narrator, is just further confirmation of God's hand at work in the lives of men. After all, Dimmesdale is shown attempting to escape the judgment of God, only to end by doing His will to the fullest. Many times in the later chapters Dimmesdale is puzzled "that Heaven should see fit to transmit the grand and solemn music of its oracles through so foul an organ-pipe as he" (212). Though his outward appearance is false, the existence of the burning brand upon his heart is the means of his effectiveness. Just as Hester's mark of shame allows her to recognize the sinful and to console them, so his inner brand adds understanding and compassion to his sermons. His deceitful concealment has served the designs of God, and he dies believing in his own salvation.

Free Will. A final element important to a general reading of The Scarlet Letter is free will. The foregoing traces of determinism do not exclude free will; instead, both exist side by side, as Roger Chillingworth's words to Hester imply:

> My old faith, long forgotten, comes back to me, and explains all that we do, and all we suffer. By thy first step awry, thou didst plant the germ of evil; but since that moment, it has all been a dark necessity. Ye that have wronged me are not sinful, save in a kind of typical illusion; neither am I fiendlike, who have snatched a fiend's office from his hands. It is our fate. Let the black flower blossom as it may. (167-168)

Here is the strong reliance on fate and "dark necessity" common to Calvinistic Puritanism, yet Roger Chillingworth credits Hester with the fall into sin that caused the trouble. It would appear that determinism and free will may both exist, though each seems logically to exclude the other. Of course, reconciling this paradox has plagued many theologians, and the narrator does not presume to supply an answer.

What is important is that this struggle between determinism and free will be recognized as important. Evidence of the struggle appears in the various attempts to explain who is responsible for the original sin which plants the seed of the "black flower." In the passage just quoted, Roger Chillingworth credits Hester's unfaithfulness, yet he realizes and admits that he himself is to blame for sending his young wife ahead to the New World unprotected and alone. Hester credits the "fouler offence" to Roger, who "in the time when her heart knew no better . . . had persuaded her to fancy herself happy at his side" (169).

Further evidence of free will is the importance of several crucial decisions to the development of the plot. Aside from the obvious choice apparent in her act of adultery, Hester makes two choices which control much of the plot and upon whose plausibility the plot is dependent for its limited reality. First of all, she chooses, while first exposed to public scorn on the scaffold, not to reveal Arthur as the father of Pearl. This scene is probably the most dramatically ironic of the entire tale. Arthur's words only too well foreshadow the truth and explain to Hester the foolishness of her silence: "Take heed how thou deniest him--who, perchance, hath not the courage to grasp it for himself--the bitter, but wholesome, cup that is now presented to thy lips!" (73) Hester's second choice occurs when she chooses to remain silent about Roger Chillingworth's real identity as her missing husband. Roger argues that she should keep his secret as she has kept the secret of her lover. Though she does swear to remain silent, how plausible is her silence? After all, Roger Chillingworth, sworn to find and punish the the unknown lover, becomes the closest companion of Arthur Dimmesdale, whom she still loves. However plausible these two choices by Hester may be, they still are decisions upon which the whole plot hangs. In both she is wrong, and her choices only add to the burden of responsibility which she must bear.

Opposing Themes, Symbols, and Characters

Most of the discussion to this point has dealt with the single opposition of free will and determinism, yet this arbitrary focus serves to suggest the many other opposing themes or concepts which appear in Hawthorne's tale. Leo Marx, in his introduction to the Signet edition, discusses several of these opposing pairs. Combining his pairs with others apparent in

Hawthorne's work produces the following chart, which also illustrates the basic dualism of the tale:

Free Will (Choice)	vs.	Determinism (Fate)
Heart	vs.	Intellect
Forest	vs.	Town
Indian or Mariner	vs.	Puritan
Red	vs.	Black
Light (Sunshine)	vs.	Dark (Shadow)
Merrie Old England	vs.	Puritan New England
Rosebush	vs.	Prison
Wild Rose	vs.	Iron
Appearance	vs.	Reality

God (Narrator's View)	vs.	Devil (Narrator's View)
Devil (Puritan View)	vs.	God (Puritan View)

Hester	vs.	Arthur
Roger Chillingworth (possessed by hate)	vs.	Roger Chillingworth (as intellectual)
Pearl the imp	vs.	Pearl the innocent or the other children

Each of these pairs represents only a single strand of the novel. Thus any discussion which isolates one strand to the exclusion of the others distorts, perhaps ruins, the overall pattern of the novel. The foregoing discussion of free will versus determinism is such a distortion, yet it illustrates the difficulty of stating one view and then asserting that this view, and only this one, represents the sole truth. For instance, it would be tempting to say that Arthur Dimmesdale equals determinism and Hester equals free will, but such tidy equations just will not do. Nor does Arthur equal intellect and Hester equal heart, though there is again much truth in these equivalences. Thus, while each characteristic in one column is opposed in some way by one in the other column, the members of a single column do not equal each other. At best, the members of a single column will suggest each other by some similarity.

Sunshine. One fact which makes many of the opposing pairs particularly difficult to discuss is that they are highly complex symbols, ones which admit many interpretations. For instance, if a student were to read The Scarlet Letter and note all the distinctive references to light (sunshine) and dark (shadow), he would find over two dozen. His problem would be to arrange them into some sort of pattern. Early in the book he would note that the incidents are happening in "Massachusetts, where iniquity is dragged out into the sunshine!" (62) Here sunshine might equal the light of truth or righteousness. Many references later the student would discover the extensive scene in Chapter 16, where the sunshine avoids Hester. As pearl exclaims, "Mother . . . the sunshine does not love you. It runs and hides itself, because it is afraid of something on your bosom" (175). Here is not the same concept of sunshine which was at work earlier, for this sunshine, if Pearl is right, will have nothing to do with Hester because she is a sinful person. Pearl is able to capture this sunshine because she is still innocent. A final noteworthy reference to sunshine is in Chapter 18, "A Flood of Sunshine." When Hester and Dimmesdale are reunited, "all at once, as with a sudden smile of heaven, forth burst the sunshine" (192). Here is sunshine which might stand for joy and happiness, but surely not for righteousness, for the narrator explains this sunshine to be "the sympathy of Nature--that wild, heathen Nature of the forest" (193). These multiple interpretations of sunshine mean that sunshine becomes a many faceted symbol, reflecting first one meaning and then another. What the students should see is how these reflected meanings enrich the novel wherever they appear.

Pearl. Pearl is another example of how complex the pairs in the lists are and how much they add to the simple action line. Pearl's very name immediately alerts us to one of her possible meanings: "But she [Hester] named the infant 'Pearl,' as being a great price--purchased with all she had--her mother's only treasure!" (91) One aspect of Pearl which appears time and again is her basic innocence; she is a "lovely and immortal flower, [one born] out of the rank luxuriance of a guilty passion" (91). Her sinful origin produces tension within the meanings which attach themselves to her. Thus, her innocence is always balanced by references to her animal, almost supernatural, spirit. During the tale she is variously characterized as "an airy sprite" or an "elf" (94), an "imp" (131), and a "nymph-child" or "infant dryad" (132). These contradictory meanings are only another way that the narrator strikes a balance. If he followed a purely Calvinistic view, he would have to show the sin of the parents being visited upon Pearl, but he avoids such a harsh possibility, being content to show that the passionate and sinful birth gives her unreal elfin quality.

These balanced images surrounding Pearl are further confirmed by her key similarity to Hester's scarlet letter. Just as the letter is red, so Pearl is often dressed in red. The elaborate embroidery of the letter is paralleled both by Pearl's own beautifully sewn dresses and by her fantastic and improbable actions. By the end of the book Hester's scarlet letter has become a symbol which works two ways: It is a lingering reminder of her sinful fall, but to most people it has become "a type of something to be sorrowed over, and looked upon with awe, yet with reverence too" (244). Though Pearl partakes of certain qualities more suitable to the forest and the supernatural, she is also filled with innocence and a prospect for happiness. Just as Hester never frees herself from the scarlet letter, Pearl is always a unique product of her sinful origin.

God vs. the Devil. Probably the most important of the opposing themes within *The Scarlet Letter* is the twin view of God and the Devil. The most evident view is the Puritan one. God is an avenging God, one who works through the strict determinism of John Calvin. Associated with this God is intellect, the iron strength to do His will, and the bitter reality of a sinful world peopled by sinful men. Opposed to Him is the Devil, who corrupted men in the beginning and whose servants are especially associated with the Indians and the mariners, not to mention the witches. A more complex view of God and the Devil is shown by the point of view of the narrator toward his material. Especially through his ironic comments about Puritan customs, he shows that the Puritan code is far from admirable, and that while the Puritans are not children of the Devil, they also are not true children of God. In the same way the narrator exhibits a good deal of sympathy toward heart or emotion, especially as this feeling guides Hester.

Hester is a sinner, but the narrator does not condemn her. That her fate is not pleasant is a sign that the narrator does not deny strict Puritanism; instead, he chooses a middle position. Here then is the moral ambiguity which characterizes *The Scarlet Letter*.

Other Symbols and Themes. You will probably wish to discuss, at least with better classes, most of the other paired symbols or themes listed above. After all, they all contribute to Hawthorne's mosaic. It is hoped that the students, guided by the questions in the Student Version, will begin to note the recurring images Hawthorne uses, for once they do begin to detect and to recall such images, they are on their way to becoming perceptive readers. *The Scarlet Letter* is an excellent test of their skills along these lines. If the students do begin to see that Hawthorne's use of images contributes to his subject (as well as to form and to point of view), then they will be better prepared for the novels which follow. For example, if they see how the forest and the city fit into *The Scarlet Letter,* they will be likely to appreciate Fitzgerald's use of the three worlds of Long Island as thematic device in *The Great Gatsby.* Or, they might contrast Hawthorne's explicit symbolic use of setting with Hardy's subtle use of setting to evoke a mood or feeling toward a character or event. Thus *The Scarlet Letter* is more than an isolated piece of literature: It becomes a touchstone which the students may use for judging other literary works.

III. *Point of View*

Much earlier in this spiral literature curriculum--in the eighth grade unit on *The Call of the Wild*--*point of view* was defined on several levels. The basic meaning given to the students was the technical one: "whether the book was written in the first or third person, whether the author is omniscient, whether he focuses on one character in particular." Beyond this basic meaning, *point of view* was defined as including three further considerations: "the point of view of a character, the point of view of the author, and our own (the reader's) point of view."

Technical Point of View

These definitions lead immediately to the problem of the technical point of view in *The Scarlet Letter.* Ordinarily it is fairly easy to assign a given book to a specific category. *The Great Gatsby* is clearly told by Nick, who is an actual character in the novel and shares in the action. The incidents in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* are presented by an omniscient narrator. But the omniscient narrator of *The Scarlet Letter* is a little more complicated. When he first appears in the long introduction entitled "The Custom House,"[1] students will have to be cautioned that Hawthorne assumed a mask in writing the introduction. The "I" of "The Custom House" does warn the reader that "it is scarcely decorous, however, to speak all, even when we speak impersonally" and that he intends to "keep the inmost Me" hidden. (16) Another proof of the falseness of the narrator is that there is no indication that Surveyor Pue's manuscript existed or that The Scarlet Letter retells actual history. Perhaps some students will recall that in their study of Roughing It the "I" of the book could not be called Samuel Clemens, who even emphasizes his distance from the incidents by using "Mark Twain." Others may recall their seventh grade reading of Rip Van Winkle, where Washington Irving chooses to use the figure Diedrich Knickerbocker.

---

[1] Though several of the comments in this section will refer to "The Custom House," it is assumed that the students will need to read only the part (pp. 38-43) which deals with the discovery of Surveyor Pue's manuscript.

But the narrator of The Scarlet Letter is different from either of these. Instead of the usual "I", The Scarlet Letter is told by a plural "we", and this "we" appears to have two slightly different meanings. For instance, the narrator often makes observations about current practices of the 1850's which contrast with the earlier ones: "We have yet to learn again the forgotten art of gayety" (218). Here the "we" includes the narrator and his contemporaries. In other places the narrator almost seems to be using the editorial "we": "Now, why the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale considered it so very fortunate, we hesitate to reveal. Nevertheless--to hold nothing back from the reader--it was because . . . " (203). This double use of "we," though a bit inconsistent, is frequent enough that there is a definite sense throughout the book of someone actually talking and presenting the incidents. And though the incidents are viewed through the eyes of a nearly omniscient narrator, the tone is not that of one who is infallible.

The narrator exists in a certain time and has a well defined personality. Many times in the book he contrasts the past with his present of the 1850's:

> Morally, as well as materially, there was a coarser fibre in those wives and maidens of old English birth and breeding than in their fair descendants, separated from them by a series of six or seven generations. (58)

Or, he may draw a parenthetical observation about the early settlers of New England, as he does in the following comments about their traditional habits:

> But it is an error to suppose that our grave forefathers--though accustomed to speak and think of human existence as a state merely of trial and warfare, and though unfeignedly prepared to sacrifice goods and life at the behest of duty--made it a matter of conscience to reject such means of comfort, or even luxury, as lay fairly within their grasp. (108)

This second quotation also illustrates the light irony of the narrator. Just as in many of his observations, the gap between the black-visaged Puritan of folk belief and the actual living Puritan supplies the ironic tension. Though this ironic tone is used sparingly, it is reinforced by the dramatic ironies of certain scenes, such as the many ironies in the conversations between the leech and his patient. The effect of this historically aware and slightly ironic narrator is to give the tale a more astringent tone, one which helps to offset the slight sentimental overtones of the basic story.

There is one final trait of the narrator which merits attention. Though he willingly supplies the thoughts and feelings of all the characters (especially Hester), he sometimes is vague about motivations or explanations. After the final scene, where Arthur Dimmesdale bares his breast to the crowd, the narrator presents several explanations about what the people saw (or didn't see) and then allows the reader to take his choice. The narrator uses the same technique with the numerous supernatural references. Often he suggests that Mistress Hibbins is the ranking witch of the town, but he never demands that his reader believe him. This tentative manner of relating the various incidents is tied to the historical perspective which is present throughout the novel. Though the narrator supplies many things which could not possibly have been in Surveyor Pue's manuscript, this tentativeness allows him to pretend to relate the sketchy historical facts. Of course, he actually goes far beyond such a limited view because he supplies detailed psychological material on all the characters.

Point of View as Subject

According to the scheme of this literature curriculum, the foregoing material on the technical point of view is only a starting point. Beyond it lie the points of view of the various characters, the author, and the reader. However, most of these areas were mentioned, at least briefly, in the discussion of the subject. Also, the following section will contribute additional material, especially on the author's point of view as reflected in the form of the novel.

IV. Form: Romance Versus Novel

Why is The Scarlet Letter called a romance? Answering this question is a convenient point of entry for the present discussion of form. Some critics, in attempting to categorize the book have gone beyond the term romance and have called Hawthorne's work an allegory, a parable, or a fable. Leo Marx combines these various terms into his claim that The Scarlet Letter is "a highly stylized symbolic fable" (xi). Whether or not the tale is best labelled a romance, these other terms do imply one reason why the book is most often called a romance.

The main trait common to allegories, fables, and parables is their lack of reality. Here then is the key prerequisite of a romance. If a work purposely uses unreal characters, settings, or actions, it is a romance. If a work strives to be realistic, it is a novel. Of course, these two types represent extremes on a wide and continuous spectrum of works loosely grouped under the heading of extended prose fiction. For example, the three "novels" of this eleventh grade curriculum begin to define this spectrum. Quite clearly The Scarlet Letter is a romance. The Great Gatsby is just as definitely a novel. Somewhere in between is The Mayor of Casterbridge, which is basically a novel, but which has some characteristics of romance.

A more detailed explanation of the differences between a romance and a novel is given in two places by Hawthorne himself. He supplies a rather extended, though vague, discussion of the two terms in his introductory essay "The Custom House" (43-47), a section of which could be used for class discussion once the students have read and discussed The Scarlet Letter itself. But, a much clearer and more concise discussion of these two terms appears in his preface to The House of Seven Gables:

> When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former--while, as a work of art, it must be rigidly subject to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart--has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation. If he thinks fit, also, he may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture.

Fantasy in Romance

The importance of Hawthorne's determination to write a romance is shown by what constitutes legitimate critical questions about the book. Once an author has constructed a certain type of work, only certain criticisms are valid. Rejecting a purposely unrealistic novel because this historical practice or that character's reaction is not realistic is impossible. For instance, earlier in this discussion of The Scarlet Letter, the plausibility of certain of Hester's actions was questioned, but only in a limited fashion. As Hawthorne himself says in the above definition of the romance, the actions may not "swerve aside from the truth of the human heart." This requirement is not quite the same as asking for reality, which usually implies a "minute fidelity . . . to . . . the ordinary course of man's experience." Instead, this requirement implies only that the motives of the characters should be basically human.

This requirement is most clearly seen by referring back to The Scarlet Letter itself. There is no pretence that the book is attempting to present a real picture of the incidents. First of all, the narrator is present, always reminding the reader to form historical opinions and suggesting alternate interpretations of the happenings. The scenes of the novel are highly artificial, both in arrangement and position. No reader could forget for one minute that the minister's night vigil on the scaffold--with the contrived appearance and actions of Hester, Pearl, and Chillingworth--is a carefully molded, artificial set-piece of the author's skill. But, even with all the unrealistic elements, the reader may still expect that characters be motivated as if they were humans.

Thus a reader or a critic may legitimately analyze Hester's actions and ask how adequately and convincingly they follow the "truth of the human heart." Or, on another level, he may ask how Hester, sometimes called an allegorical representative of Heart, reflects or parallels the true condition of the human heart which allows itself to be scarred and seared by sin.

Another result of Hawthorne's decision to write a romance is that he immediately begins to work within a set of conventions which control its content and form. As indicated, the main convention is that the tale contain some elements of fantasy or imagination. But Hawthorne, in the previously mentioned preface to The House of Seven Gables, supplies a limit on this convention. He makes the following comment about the amount of fantasy or imagination allowed in a romance:

> He [the writer] will be wise, no doubt, to make a very moderate use of the privileges here stated, and, especially, to mingle the Marvellous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor, than as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the public.

Here Hawthorne is prefiguring the practices of many modern writers of romances. In order to give their works a credibility, they supply the fantastic only when it is necessary to their plot. Perhaps this desire for credibility was the reason Hawthorne chose to supply the narrator with the fictitious manuscript by Surveyor Pue. Another reason was that he was conforming with a tradition going back to such eighteenth century novels as Defoe's Moll Flanders, in which the incidents are purported to be actual events. Of course, the most likely model for this technique of using a pseudo-historical basis was the creation of Diedrich Knickerbocker by Washington Irving, whose works are mentioned or implied several times in "The Custom House."

Moral View in a Romance

Beyond this convention of qualified unreality in a romance is the usual inclusion of a moral. Some of the best illustrations of this second convention are medieval romances (e. g., the Arthurian tales), where there is an underlying moral basis for the actions of the knights, the dragons, and the helpless damsels. Similarly in The Scarlet Letter, the moral is the basis of the story and shapes the patterns and incidents in it.

Probably the best example of the results of these two conventions is the structure supplied to The Scarlet Letter by the three key scenes on the scaffold in the market place. These scenes open and close the novel, as well as divide it in the middle with the night-long vigil on the scaffold by Arthur Dimmesdale. In the opening scene, only Hester and Pearl are together before the people. Then Dimmesdale joins them on the scaffold in the middle scene, but the darkness shields both him and his sin. In the final scene he joins them and exposes his guilt. There are innumerable other parallels between the scenes. For example, Pearl reacts toward Dimmesdale in a different way in each scene. In the opening scene when he begins to speak to Hester, Pearl holds up her "little arms, with a half pleased half plaintive murmur" (73). In the middle scene she takes the minister's hand, but tries to withdraw from it when he refuses to stand with her and her mother at "noontide" (148) and even laughs at him when he begins to play the "teacher of truth" (149). In the closing scene she is the one who flies to Dimmesdale when he mounts the scaffold and summons her and her mother. The effect of such symbolic or allegorical incidents is an air of unreality. At the same time the moral and thematic implications become clearer and clearer.

Alternative or Hypothetical Forms

A final point about the form of The Scarlet Letter lies not with the conventions followed, but with conventions ignored. Out of the thousands of variations--some minor, others drastic--which Hawthorne could have used, why did he pick the form he did? One way to answer this question would be to investigate Hawthorne's biography in order to determine why he chose the setting, the characters, and the various incidents of The Scarlet Letter. But such biographical considerations all too often add little to the actual work of art itself. A better approach would be to consider some of the more readily available alternatives.

How, for instance, would a strict novelistic approach (in Hawthorne's sense) to The Scarlet Letter have changed the tale and its effect? Probably the students would enjoy discussing this question in terms of the contrasting movie versions of the tale. They should be able to suggest some of the techniques a movie might use in capturing the fantasy world of Hawthorne's actual work. Most of them will be familiar with the symbolic language used by a film to convey meaning--though they are not always aware that they are. They will know that the camera lens permits various distortions, ones which can represent the confused, dream-like world of fantasy. Also, lighting effects will probably occur to them. Knowing just these two techniques, they should be able to discuss the fantasy elements possible in the second of the three scaffold scenes. Then they could discuss the different visual effects possible if the scene were done in a strictly realistic or naturalistic manner. How would Mistress Hibbens and her conjectured night flying activities be presented in the realistic version? Do we assume that witches exist and that she should be shown riding off on her broomstick? What would be the effect of leaving Mistress Hibbens out completely? Does she supply a moral position or alternative which is needed in the novel? These are only some of the questions which naturally arise from a contrast of the subtle fantasy of the actual tale and its imagined realistic rendering, but answering only these questions would tell the students a good deal about Hawthorne's original.

Pursuing this method of analysis a little further leads to speculation about the points of view Hawthorne chose not to use. The effect, for example, of a first person narrative through the eyes of any one of the main characters would be fascinating. What scenes would automatically drop out? Would any scenes be added? Could the romance form be maintained? The possibilities for questions are endless.

Such Questions will be pointless if pursued as an end in themselves. But if they are used to illuminate the tale--its point of view, its form, and its subject--then they are valid. Thus by discussing the various forms the novel might have taken, students will be led to a deeper appreciation of Hawthorne's superb romance.

THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE
By Thomas Hardy

(Page references are to the Doubleday paperback edition, Dolphin Book C 153.)

In The Mayor of Casterbridge, Hardy speculates about the forces which direct the universe; like Hawthorne, he is caught somewhere between a deterministic view and an idea that man causes much of his own suffering. But the book's philosophical content is woven into and indeed grows out of an ever active and complex plot, centered on the tremendously energetic figure of Michael Henchard.

I. Thomas Hardy.

Casterbridge is much like the southern English town of Dorchester, near which Hardy was born in 1840 and spent most of his life, although he also lived in London for a time and travelled widely. After a good education, at sixteen he became apprenticed as an architect, still, however, studying widely in Greek classics and contemporary philosophical writings. His several years as an architect probably led to his careful physical detailing of settings. Always writing poetry and novels, he felt enough confidence in his literary ability to give up architecture entirely in 1872 after publishing Under the Greenwood Tree.

A few lesser novels followed before he learned that combination of local color and tragic structure which seemed to suit him--and The Return of the Native was published. Casterbridge was his next major work; then came The Woodlanders. Tess of the D'Urbervilles raised enormous controversy over the moral content of Hardy's work; Jude the Obscure, yet greater debate.

The effect of the controversy was that Hardy became a wealthy man and a disillusioned one. Tired of a reading public which seemed afraid to see in print the very ideas which were on its mind, he turned to poetry, which he had always considered his true vocation. From 1896 until his death in 1927, he worked as a poet, and particularly as author of his epic-drama about Napoleon, The Dynasts. Here the idea of some power which determines events with no regard for human feelings, an idea implied in each of his major novels, dominates in the reigning spirit of the Immanent Will.

The Mayor of Casterbridge, essentially a book about loneliness, has some suggestions of such an impersonal destiny. But Henchard's tragic loneliness is self-inflicted to a degree unusual in Hardy. By the end of the study of the book, students should see that the other characters contribute some form of comparison or contrast to bring out this aspect of character in Henchard, and that further emphasis is developed through the mood-determining setting and through irony, which brings out the cruelty of the situation. In other words, the loneliness of Henchard is the center of the novel; all other details grow from and in turn contribute to this central subject.

II. Prelude: The Young Henchard (Ch. I-II).

Samuel Chew has said that Hardy possesses to a greater degree than any other English writer "the ability to read into a series of happenings to a group of unimportant people in a remote district a universal application, a suggestion of the inescapable one-ness that enfolds all human affairs" (32). Henchard is shown throughout as a man who, individualized though he is, represents all men in that his character has an effect on his fate.

It might seem desirable to have students observe the first chapter closely to discover to what degree Hardy is presenting an everyman character, to what degree an individual. They will probably note that the first description of Henchard is an unparticularized picture of a man plodding down a dusty road and isolating himself from the family beside him, a position indicative of his unhappy and self-isolating plodding through the rest of his life. At this time little individualizes him from any other ambitious, discontented young laborer, "the scene for that matter being one that might have been matched at almost any spot in any county in England at this time of the year" (8). The universality of Hardy's theme is suggested: the story to follow could, it seems, happen to any man of somewhat similar character and situation. The only characteristic which at all separates him here from other men is a "dogged and cynical indifference" (7), a stubborn refusal to pay attention to those around him, although beneath the surface he cares for and needs them terribly. Indifference here isolates him; we soon learn, when he spies the furmity woman's rum, that he also has the "instinct of a perverse character" (8) for getting himself into trouble.

And these two character traits, his indifference toward his wife and his perversity in taking too much rum, combined with his impulsive action according to feeling rather than thought, immediately lead to his first self-isolation. His loneliness is suggested when, just after the sale, he tells the observer that, were the event to take place again, he would not let his wife take the child with her (18).

Although Henchard is by now a particularized character, Hardy attempts to retain the idea that such events could happen to any man by trying to make the sale seem probable, an attempt certainly obvious enough for all students to see. Later the furmity woman tells Susan, "Lord bless ye, we don't gi'e it headroom we don't, such as that"(26). And the author himself comments that the whole would be difficult to believe if rural records did not show that many other peasant women had been sold, then had religiously stayed by their purchasers(27).

It is tremendously important that students think about the degree to which Henchard is responsible for his own loneliness, for his own fate. The sale is, of course, partially the result of chance: the furmity tent is selected, the rum is provided, Newson comes along at precisely the right moment. But, although the circumstances make the event possible, it wouldnot have taken place were Henchard's character not flawed by impulsiveness, indifference, and a stubborn determination to follow through with what he has begun. The blame lies with Henchard, as he himself admits in thinking about how he must find his family and suffer the shame which would result from seeing them again, the shame being his own fault.

III. The Successful Henchard (Ch. III-XXII).

The first section has provided a sort of prelude to the actual tragedy, a preparation and presentation of hidden events of the past, comparable to the information about the past given by Creon and Jocasta in Oedipus Rex. Students should be able to discern the care with which Hardy shows that Mayor Henchard is the same impulsive man who sold his wife eighteen years earlier. Time has changed his outward appearance and situation, but he retains the same impetuous temper beneath the mild civilized surface of the public official--the temper which, under the influence of alcohol, had caused him to sell his wife many years earlier (39). New details will be added, for Hardy does not present a character all at once; instead he reveals new traits, new complexities of personality slowly, as we come to know people in life. But centrally the man is the same throughout the book. We know little of his rise in fortune, but we could guess that it is caused by the same determination and impulse to strong, swift action which cause his fall.

It was the chance of liquor and of Newson's arrival, plus the impulsive temper of the man, which led to the wife-selling; similar causes lead to the seemingly innocent but eventually disastrous hiring of Farfrae. Chance brings the Scotsman to hear Henchard's wish that he could renew the spoiled wheat. Then it is impulse more than thought which causes Henchard to ask him to stay, for as Henchard himself admits, "others would do for the place without doubt," yet he asks Farfrae to work with him and name his own terms, "for, hand it, Farfrae, I like thee well" (64).

By this time Henchard is aware of his tendency to hurt himself through his own impulsive actions; while speaking of his wrongs to Susan and Lucetta, he comments to Farfrae that it just seems unnatural that a man of his nature could live for twenty years without making more than one mistake (76).

Hope for overcoming his loneliness accompanies the return of wife and daughter to his house. The next isolation, from Susan, is entirely the result of chance in the form of death. But it is again impulse which causes him to read Susan's letter immediately, and thus learn that Elizabeth-Jane is not his daughter. And it is also impulse which makes him insist, unreasonably, that he now thoroughly dislikes her whom he formerly liked, an attitude leading to an entirely voluntary and self-caused isolation from the now affectionate step-daughter.

But he is a man who desperately needs the affection he keeps pushing away from himself; the disappointment of finding that Elizabeth-Jane is not his, that he has no children, leaves "an emotional void in Henchard that he unconsciously craved to fill" (140). So Lucetta, formerly merely an aggravating responsibility, becomes desirable as one to provide love and companionship, particularly since by this time his relationship with Farfrae is also strained.

By now Henchard is already rather fully isolated, and the foundation for his destruction is laid. But outwardly he is still a thriving business-man and pillar of the town, despite the growing doubts of some associates. Perhaps students could profit from stopping at this point to take stock of Henchard's position, to see what possibilities are open for him and what Hardy has done to indicate which possible road will be the one actually followed. Hardy has been accused of being so totally deterministic that the characters can in no way develop or change their paths after the first few chapters. Such observation of possible courses from time to time should help students determine to what degree this accusation is true.

Comparing Hardy's fatalism with the degree and the kind of determinism found in The Scarlet Letter might be of interest. Hawthorne is, of course, more concerned with the theology of determinism than is Hardy, so he speaks of predestination but assumes that when a choice of courses is open characters have free will to select between them. Hardy, too, suggests that some events may be determined, but here he is more concerned with whether it is a man's will or his character which makes the decision when a choice is open. He appears to be saying that a man's character is determined by fate and that it is this character which prescribes what course he chooses; if this is true, Hardy's characters do not have even the sort of free will open to those of Hawthorne. Hardy might, were he writing a novel with the plot of The Scarlet Letter, suggest that given her character, Hester had no choice in how to act with Dimmesdale. Hawthorne indicates that determined events have thrown them into an extremely tempting situation but that they still were free to decide against sin.

IV. Henchard's Fall (Ch. XXIII-XLV).

The meeting of Farfrae and Lucetta marks the real beginning of Henchard's fall. It is primarily chance which throws Lucetta and Farfrae together, but it is Henchard's characteristic blundering, unthinking attempts to defeat them which drive them from him. He has impetuously fired Farfrae and now treats him with rash rudeness as a rival; these and similar signs of temper lead Lucetta to cry out in her own passionate lack of thought, "I will love him [Farfrae] ! . . . as for him [Henchard] -- he's hot-tempered and stern, and it would be madness to give myself to him knowing that" (168).

Many townspeople have begun to doubt that Henchard is entirely the respectable, solid citizen he seems, and their suspicions become reality with the trial of the furmity woman. Her return is, of course, highly coincidental. Yet we may feel that it had to happen, for, as Albert Guerard has observed, ". . . it is the very convention of this tragedy that every ghost of our past life must return to confront us at last; that it is impossible to lay a ghost; that the ghost inhabits us in the form of a self-destructive urge" (57). It is a book in which a character's fate is determined by his "ghosts," by his past, and also by the way he reacts to that past--his reaction being determined by his character. Chance has brought the furmity woman back. But it is Henchard's character which makes the event harmful, for had he denied the story, none would have accepted the word of the furmity woman against that of the wealthy ex-mayor.

Students have seen such determination of the present by hidden events of the past in *The Scarlet Letter* and will find it again in *The Great Gatsby.* Like Hawthorne, Hardy is concerned with the degree to which this is a deliberate and fixed determination, unchangeable by human hands. But he is more like Fitzgerald in his concern for the way these events grow out of and interact with character.

Henchard's anger over the association of Lucetta and Farfrae leads to impassioned attempts at revenge through attacking Farfrae's business, but characteristic impatience plus the chance of weather brings the final blows which lead to bankruptcy, poverty, eventually to employment with the enemy. Total defeat comes when he cannot kill Farfrae; after the fight even the masculine strength which so often brought him trouble seems to be gone from the man who crouches in a womanly fashion on the hay sacks (257). The idea of strength removed is brought out again in such images as "fangless lion" (289) and "Samson shorn" (302). Students will probably need to be reminded of the story of how Samson lost his strength with his hair to understand the latter image.

It is that very evening that he fails in the attempt to bring Farfrae back to his sick wife--and this failure brings home to him the full degree to which he himself is to blame for his suffering: "He cursed himself like a less scrupulous Job, as a vehement man will do when he loses self-respect, the last mental prop under poverty" (268). But it is that same night that he sees Elizabeth-Jane, who until now he had so avoided, as the one hope remaining against utter darkness (270). When he faces Newson, come to take her from him, "Henchard's face and eyes seemed to die" (272); small wonder that the momentary impulse of the usually bluntly honest man was to send the new enemy away with a lie. But it was this lie, more than the lack of actual blood relationship, which was later to cause the final total separation from Elizabeth-Jane on the night of her wedding.

Now the isolation is complete--"Susan, Farfrae, Lucetta, Elizabeth--all had gone from him, one after one, either by his fault or by his misfortune" (277). Fate had not even given him the musical ability which might have been of some consolation, and he hears "singular symphonies" (277) drawing him to the waters in which he plans to drown himself. But chance, which has so contributed to his past tortures, saves him for more pain by bringing his effigy to the surface--leading to the temporary notion that "even I be in Somebody's hand" (280).

As long as Newson stays away, there remains the possibility of friendship if he willingly gives Elizabeth-Jane in marriage to Farfrae. Reason is for it, but impulse again overcomes wisdom when he sees Farfrae look at Elizabeth; feeling again makes him choose the course which will bring increased suffering upon himself, the course of hating even the possibility of their marriage (284). But the now pitiable "fangless lion" does nothing to prevent the hated union; once he would immediately have acted upon his dislike of the situation, now he forces himself to submit passively to Elizabeth-Jane's will (284).

And so he leaves, totally alone, isolated by self and chance from all those he loves, yet still doggedly, stubbornly too proud to admit his suffering, saying "I--Cain--go alone as I deserve--an outcast and a vagabond. But my punishment is not greater than I can bear" (293). (Students would better understand this reference if Genesis 11-14 were read to them.) And increasing the pain is Henchard's now complete awareness that all this is his own fault, that he had been drawn away not by Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae but by his own feeling that he was not wanted (300). The sense of self-blame is so strong that he leaves the wedding party at the first sign of reproach from Elizabeth, for, as she later observes, he is "one of his own worst accusers" (307).

V. Contrast in Farfrae.

You may find that a discussion of Farfrae presents an ideal opportunity to demonstrate to students the interrelated nature of the book's subject and form, since his position of contrast with Henchard plays an important part in each. His acquisition of friends emphasizes Henchard's developing loneliness. And as will be shown in the later discussion of form, the contrasted rise of Farfrae and fall of Henchard give a structural balance important to form.

Farfrae--the opposite of Henchard, the excitable, impassioned, impulsive blunderer--is presented as a man of balance, of reason, of thought. He is not the total negation of Henchard; he has a good supply of feeling, as shown in his excited singing at the inn. But reason controls most of his actions; he is too sensible to return to the native land for which he is homesick but which offers less business opportunity, too reasonable also to go off to the land of his dreams in America when a surer future offers itself in Casterbridge. Henchard realizes from the beginning how valuable Farfrae's ways are in business--although he does not stop to think that in hiring a man of business skills he may be hiring his own worst enemy: "In my business," he notes, "'tis true that strength and bustle build up a firm. But judgment and knowledge are what keep it established" (49).

Elizabeth-Jane early perceives the balance between thought and feeling which usually characterizes Farfrae; she decides "that his statements showed him to be no less thoughtful than his fascinating melodies revealed him to be cordial and impassioned" (52). And a friend pinpoints the difference between the men in saying to Henchard after his sports day has been ruined by rain, "But you didn't think of it, you see; and he did, and that's where he's beat you" (104).

Farfrae's feelings are frequently apparent but are overcome by reason at all times except when he meets Lucetta. Her charms belie her true nature--which is not really bad, just slightly false--; his business mood vanishes although it is market day. He forgets an appointment. He even sneaks off to marry, a real blunder in the world of this book, in which secretiveness seems to be the surest way to suffering. Yet it costs him only the anguish of Lucetta's death, from which he quickly recovers to follow the path of reason and marry Elizabeth-Jane. His ability to succeed even after error may be partially the result of luck; yet as Hardy says of the first stages in his rise, "Most probably luck had little to do with it. Character is Fate, said Novalis, and Farfrae's character was just the reverse of Henchard's" (110).

VI. The Women: Repetition of the Male Pattern.

The two principal women of the book, Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane, present similar pairing, similar evidence that "Character is Fate" and that impulsive, unreasoned action leads to isolation and tragedy. After having discussed the Henchard-Farfrae contrast, students should be able to see some of the relationships here themselves. Lucetta's impulsiveness is shown in her original intimacy with Henchard; in her careless commitment of her relationship with him to letters, even after marriage; in her attraction to Farfrae after knowing him only a few minutes. Hardy says that she aimed at Farfrae rather than at anyone higher because she "reasoned nothing," but, anxious to salvage her reputation, simply "with native lightness of heart took kindly what fate offered" (169). Henchard has shown how harmful may be a seemingly justifiable effort to cover up a past mistake; Lucetta too suffers for attempting to hide her error to satisfy feeling instead of reasonably atoning for it by marrying Henchard. And her deceptions include hiding not only her error itself but her true name and home. Nance Mockridge shows an awareness of Lucetta's general falsity, saying, "I do like to see the trimming pulled off such Christmas candles" (250).

The parallels of her life and Henchard's are manifold. Each originally errs in impulsively ignoring the rules of society. Each attempts to cover up past sins. But through impulsive blunders each allows the sins to be revealed. Each is drawn to Elizabeth-Jane, then eventually repels her; each is betrayed by a foolish over-fondness for Farfrae. The furmity woman is a tool in each revelation; she tells Henchard's tale, then urges Jopp to reveal to the group at Peter's Finger the contents of the package in which Henchard has wrapped Lucetta's letters (242). And the revelation could have been less serious in each case had not each reacted with strong feelings of shamed pride, feelings which eventually kill them--had they, in other words, acted with the reasonableness Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane show when disappointed.

Although she is not devoid of feeling, Elizabeth-Jane presents a balance of feeling with reason and propriety which contrasts with Lucetta's more total reliance on impulse. She has a willingness to sacrifice her pride for her mother by serving at the inn, a lowering of pride of a sort more possible in Farfrae, who comes humbly to Henchard several times in efforts to patch quarrels, than in Henchard or Lucetta. She is sorrowful at her mother's death and at her loss of Farfrae, yet like Farfrae when Lucetta dies, she turns from unreasoned, impassioned grieving. And above all she has the good sense to be aware of the necessity for open and absolute propriety: "Any suspicion of impropriety was to Elizabeth-Jane like a red rag to a bull. Her craving for correctness of procedure was, indeed, almost vicious." (203)

Her career and Farfrae's are less strikingly parallel than Henchard's and Lucetta's, Elizabeth's fortune falling somewhat with Henchard's, then rising suddenly at the end, while Farfrae's rises steadily throughout the book. As Farfrae ends up precisely in the position held by Henchard, so Elizabeth as his wife takes the place held by Lucetta at her most successful.

VII. Natural Setting and Irony as Devices of Emphasis.

Students frequently find Hardy's descriptive passages dull, possibly because they do not understand the importance of setting to the total effect of his works. To Hardy setting is not just the necessary background paraphernalia against which human events take place; it is almost part of the events, blending with them and often serving as a sort of commentary which shows the reader how he should think about the occurences. Although some of the background details are disguised here, it is certainly to be hoped that students will be able to discover the significance of these and others on their own.

The tragedy of Henchard, the center of the book, is emphasized not only through comparison and contrast with other characters but also by the natural background. Everything through which Henchard passes seems to be decadent, in need of cleansing and purifying, a cleansing and purifying to be accomplished only by removing him from the world, as the removal of Oedipus restores Thebes, as order comes back to Scotland after Macbeth is killed. Even the countryside through which Henchard walks with Susan before the sale is a dust-covered area of "doomed leaves" in which a weak bird sings a "trite old evening song" (9). Thus before we know anything of the events of the book we can discern something of the place he will take in society. At the fair are "inspired monsters" (10); within the furmity tent a "haggish creature" is presiding over the "antiquated slop" (11), and during the sale itself "a lurid color seemed to fill the tent" (16).

We noted earlier that the town of Casterbridge is much like Hardy's own Dorchester. But more significant to the students' understanding of the book is that the detailing of the town again shows us how we are to think of Henchard as related to society. Here too signs of the ugly in nature and in man surround him. The older guests at the banquet are "snuffing and grunting over their plates like sows nuzzling for acorns" (36). The three mariners on the inn sign stand in "paralyzed attitudes"; they have "suffered largely from warping, splitting, fading, and shrinkage" (43). The Ring, where Henchard meets Susan and later Lucetta, then spies on Elizabeth-Jane, is a sinister place of intrigue. At first description the only parts of Henchard's garden which are visible are the espaliers, which "had grown so stout, and cramped, and gnarled, that they had pulled their stakes out of the ground and stood distorted and writhing in vegetable agony, like leafy Lacoons" (73). The comic mask behind Lucetta's house exhibits a similar distortion, since the throwing of stones "chipped off the lips and jaws as if they had been eaten away by disease" (134). And a yet uglier area is Mixen Lane, where Lucetta's doings are revealed.

Yet the beauties of nature are ever-present behind the ugly shadows cast by the temporary evil of the presence of Henchard and Lucetta, suggesting that this is only a surface blight beneath which the basic structures of harmonious society remain. The scene outside the furmity tent is one of place, in contrast with the evil activities within (17). Casterbridge is repeatedly mentioned as being close to the natural atmosphere of the agricultural areas surrounding it (57 etc.). On the morning of Henchard's final removal from any pretense of public position--when the royal personage visits--there is permanence in the glow of the sun (245).

And the idea of the end of evil is yet clearer in the scene when Lucetta dies: "Lucifer was fading into day across Durnover Moor; the sparrows were just alighting into the street, and the hens had begun to cackle from the out-house" (270). "Lucifer" here is, of course, a reference to darkness, but it is also an obvious suggestion of the diabolic which fades with the death of Lucetta. The corrupting influence of Henchard is recognized by Farfrae when he removes the former mayor from the celebration for the royal personage; that of Lucetta, by the frequenters of Peter's Finger when they stage the skimmity ride to harm her.

Natural surroundings are used largely to point out the corrupting effect of evil humanity even the ineffectively evil ones who harm themselves more than others; irony, on the other hand, is used to emphasize further the pain which Henchard in particular causes not to those around him but to himself. This irony usually consists of the coming of a wished-for event at a time when it does more harm than good, of the arrival of a circumstance which in itself seems desirable but turns out to be undesirable, frequently only because of ill timing. Thus Susan leads Henchard away from the beer tent into the furmity tent, which happens to contain the greater danger of rum. The sale seems at least financially desirable, yet in the end Henchard lost rather than gained by it, since he spent much more than the five guineas in the search. And Lucetta finds herself wanting to get rid of Henchard as soon as he truly wishes to marry her.

One of the cruelest ironies of the plot--and one certainly obvious enough to be discerned by all students--is the timing of Henchard's opening of Susan's letter saying that Elizabeth-Jane is not his daughter, which occurs just after he has told her that he is her father. Their show of affection then becomes a mockery of what he had formerly wished: "Henchard bent and kissed her cheek. The moment and the act he had contemplated for weeks with a thrill of pleasure; yet it was no less than a miserable insipidity to him now that it had come" (123). This seems almost the work of a malignant Fate, but Henchard himself sees it as the result of his occasional tendency away from absolute propriety, which always brings pain and which here allows him to ignore Susan's directions, combined with natural events, since he went to the drawer quite naturally at the time to find papers he thought would prove his paternity (121).

A perhaps crueler irony, and certainly one which is less Henchard's own fault, is the arrival of Newson on precisely the day when Henchard had decided that he might love Elizabeth-Jane although she is not his real daughter. In his agony he tells the lie which seems desirable at the moment, yet eventually causes greater pain.

After discussing these few examples, students will probably be able to find others of the book's many small ironies for themselves. But some careful questioning may be necessary before they can discover the central irony of the book: that Henchard finds, when his dreams of money and position come true, that what he has dreamed of and worked so hard to acquire is worth much less than the human companionship he gave up on the way. Although filled with smaller ironies, The Scarlet Letter has nothing of the all-encompassing scope of this, which looks forward to The Great Gatsby and back to Oedipus's ironic insistence on finding the killer of Laius.

VIII. The Book as Tragedy (Form).

This irony is, as has been said, used to emphasize the pain of the fall in this novel based on the traditional form of tragedy. From their drama study, students should be sufficiently familiar with the characteristics of tragic form to be able to detect them now in a different genre. Like Macbeth, Henchard is gradually isolated from his friends and loved ones, largely through his own actions, although chance events also contribute. Macbeth of course cuts himself off from former friends Duncan and Banquo by killing them; then his strange actions, the result of guilt, repel other former associates. Death, probably the result of guilt, then takes Lady Macbeth. Like Henchard, Macbeth is at his lowest point totally alone; so alone that death seems a desirable end.

But the coming to and going from Casterbridge of Henchard is more like the pattern of Oedipus, who enters Thebes, builds his own reputation, and is defeated by his unknown guilt and his own personality, so that he leaves the city as lowly as when he came and far more wretched. Henchard's leavetaking closely parallels his coming, as Hardy takes care to emphasize; yet as with Oedipus his spirit has been totally defeated, although ironically he now has the wisdom which would make success possible. Students will probably enjoy picking out the parallels (292-93, 96-9) but should also be encouraged to examine the differences between the two situations, then to think about the causes of these differences.

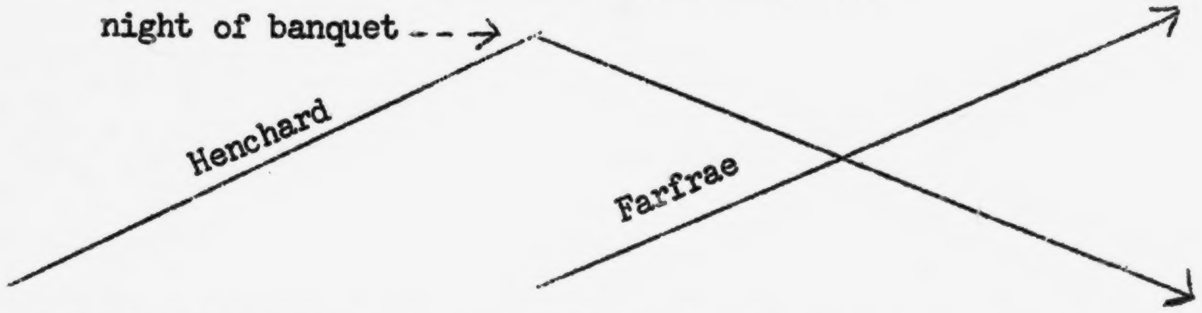
Had Henchard been more totally evil, we could say that this departure is merely the ousting of the villain of a comedy. But, as Lucetta tells Elizabeth-Jane, "He is a hot-tempered man--a little proud--perhaps ambitious; but not a bad man" (131). Our sympathies are entirely with him, for although character flaws do bring about most of his suffering, his character is only flawed, not evil, so that the punishment seems far too great for whatever slight crimes he has committed. And as Harvey Curtis Webster observes, "We feel that even his character is not his fault. The seemingly sinister power that designed the cruel process of sexual selection and the law of battle by which men live, which controls even accident, also dictated Henchard's impulses." That "ingenious machinery contrived by the Gods" consists, then, not just of the effects of Chance or Fate but of their combination with character, actually another result of Chance.

We are yet more ready to sympathize with Henchard because he has so blunderingly but sincerely attempted to make reparation for his sins, to be kind in every way to those he has formerly hurt. But ironically such attempts do not help him; if anything, they lead him into yet greater trouble. So he might be justified in seeing the world as cruelly unfair:

> He experienced not only the bitterness of a man who finds, in looking back upon an ambitious course, that what he has sacrificed in sentiment was worth as much as what he has gained in substance; but the superadded bitterness of seeing his recantation nullified. He had been sorry for all this long ago; but his attempts to replace ambition by love had been as fully foiled as his ambition itself. (298)

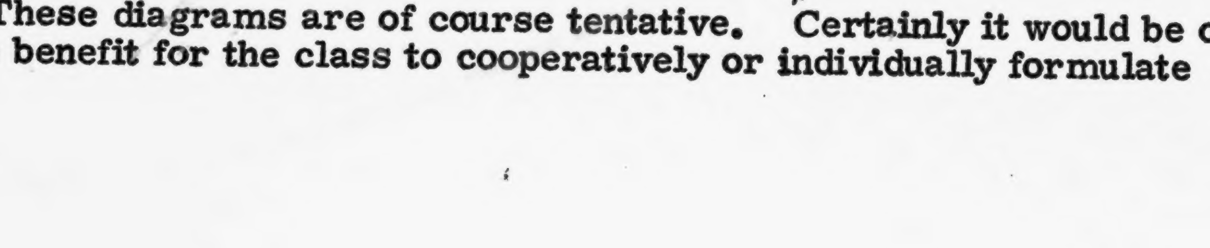
As in most tragedy, and in both Macbeth and Oedipus, a sense of return to peace and normality comes after the corrupting influence of the flawed hero is removed. We have already noted that with the defeats of Lucetta and Henchard, nature's beautiful side becomes more obvious, the sun shining with a permanent glow and the sparrows coming into town. And peace reigns from then on in the mayor's house: "From this time forward Elizabeth-Jane found herself in a latitude of calm weather . . . . the lively and sparkling emotions of her early married life cohered into an equable serenity . . . ."

Another aspect of the tragic form which also occurs in Oedipus or Macbeth is the juxtaposed pattern of rise and fall of two men. We can find three pairs which reward comparison: Oedipus-Creon; Macbeth-Malcom; Henchard-Farfrae. This pattern is so closely related to the subject of the book that it has been quite thoroughly discussed in the earlier sections on the main characters as related to subject--a good object lesson in the impossibility of separating form and subject. It is a type of development found in history plays, in which one ruler often rises as another falls. Shakespeare's Richard II, for example, loses power as Bolingbroke gains it. We might diagram the pattern in our novel thus:



Farfrae's rise begins at the peak of Henchard's career. He rises to a point precisely parallel with Henchard's peak--with every possibility of climbing further--while Henchard falls to a point as low as Farfrae first was in fortune and power but much lower in spirit, in self-esteem. The effect of this formally contrasting pattern is, of course, to make Henchard's fall seem the more bitter and cruel, particularly since ironically it was he who gave Farfrae his foothold in Casterbridge.

The parallel patterns of Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane are more difficult to diagram, since their positions frequently depend on the current status of the men with whom they are associated. The most notable difference from the male pattern is that the crisis and turn in each life occurs much later in the book; then the subsequent rise and fall occur much more quickly. The pattern might be somewhat like this:



These diagrams are of course tentative. Certainly it would be of more benefit for the class to cooperatively or individually formulate ideas on the structure of the book, discussing the significance of each point as they go.

IX. The Book as Novel (Point of View; Genre).

We have spoken of the form of The Mayor of Casterbridge in much the same terms we use for tragic drama; a comparison with a drama should enable the students to identify some of the features which make the work a novel. It is largely point of view, of course, which determines that it is prose fiction rather than drama; it is told in the third person, with some what limited omniscience. Since the story is not seen through the eyes of one person, the author can move from place to place and time to time at will, in a manner which is quite artificial and unrealistic but is convenient for an author whose story involves the lives of several people. This is made obvious through such remarks as ". . . we may briefly explain how he [Farfrae] came here" (63). At times the events of a chapter or two may be presented as if they were seen through the eyes of one person; the death of Henchard, for example, is given only in the details which Elizabeth-Jane knew of it. Frequently important details such as the fact that Newson is still alive or that Miss Templeton is actually Lucetta are delayed to create suspense. But only once are we conspicuously left without a direct view of an important scene, when Lucetta is dying and Hardy leaves "secret" her final words with Farfrae (270). Students might profit from discussion of reasons for these and other retractions of omniscience.

The surface thoughts of any important character may be presented; we see Henchard's surprise as he opens Susan's letter, Elizabeth-Jane's wondering what will come next when she loses Farfrae, Lucetta's insistence that "I will love him" (168). Yet never do we go deeper, into the semi-conscious, psychologically revealing ideas, debates, fleeting thoughts. For example, we know how Henchard afterward consciously justifies to himself his lie to Newson, but we directly know almost nothing of the surging guilt which apparently tortured him after the deed; this is revealed through his grasping at any justification at all as well as through external actions: the attempted suicide, the leave-taking as soon as Newson returns, the quick departure from the wedding party at the first sign of Elizabeth-Jane's displeasure. The resultant characterization is close to drama, since we know the external actions and words of characters, besides the kind of conscious internal thoughts we might learn through soliloquy--but little more. But Hardy has added analytic comments and natural descriptions impossible in drama.

The effect is actually much like that of the point of view of The Scarlet Letter, since in each case the narrator has similar knowledge of his characters. However, Hawthorne's narrator speaks of himself as a person, one existing in a time different from that of the characters. The result is that he seems to be more distinct from his characters and thus possibly better able to analyze them objectively, although perhaps less able to understand their feelings. He is able to use the editorial "we," suggesting that he is looking from the same position as his reader at people in a different society.

So it is chiefly point of view which makes The Mayor of Casterbridge prose fiction rather than drama. But most critics agree that the term "novel" should not cover all of the huge category of prose fiction. It is usually divided into at least novel and romance. As early as 1785 Clara Reeve distinguished the two in her Progress of Romance: "The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the time in which it is written. The Romance, in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen." In The Scarlet Letter teacher version, it is stated that "If a work purposely uses unreal characters, settings, or actions, it is a romance. If a work strives to be realistic, it is a novel." And Hawthorne is quoted as saying that a writer of a romance "wishes to claim a certain latitude"--to allow the ideas he wishes to present to govern the selection of details for his book, without regard for whether those details could occur in real life. Therefore events can be pushed into the somewhat unrealistic form of allegory, with characters who may stand for qualities such as evil, selfishness, purity, generosity, etc. The more life-like novel characters are complex, "rounded" mixtures of such traits; they are rarely either entirely good or entirely bad. These "real" characters must exist in and react with society, as people do, but the setting of romance is often some distant and isolated spot in which the characters react only with each other. Often romance occurs in the "distance" of the past. And if the writer finds that reaction to the supernatural best allows him to present the "truth of the human heart," nothing prevents him from including impossible happenings.

The writer of romance, then, moves away from reality in such areas as form, character, presentation, and setting. Perhaps The Mayor of Casterbridge is most romantic in its highly balanced, formalized structure. One could hardly claim that it is realistic for Henchard and Farfrae to change places so exactly, for Lucetta and Elizabeth to reflect so completely their pattern. This artificial manipulation of plot is used not in an effort to be realistic but in an effort to make the subject of the book clear and emphatic.

But the primary characters certainly are the complex, rounded characters of novel rather than the one-sided, flat figures of romance. Henchard has enough evil in him to corrupt the atmosphere around him; yet he is not at all a fully bad man, for he can be generous to Abel Whittle's mother, attentive to the pale ghost Susan, loving to Elizabeth-Jane. Lucetta too is more weak than bad; her love for Farfrae is virtuous in the extreme. Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae, the "good" characters, both show hints of coldness, of a lack of strongly binding affection, which prevent them from being fully likable. Some of the minor characters seem less well-rounded, but this may be attributed to our not knowing them well enough to see more than their most prominent characteristics.

Although some of the externals, particularly of agricultural methods, date the scene some decades before the writing of the book, the general atmosphere is that of an urban community roughly contemporary with Hardy. Every effort is made to cause the sometimes rather strange events to appear probable and natural. We may detect a suggestion of romance in the hints that these events are directed by a supernatural Fate or Chance. Yet the emphasis is less on the idea of predestined Fate than on the Chance element, which in hit-or-miss fashion creates men's characters, using the law of averages as the only guide, then tosses them into the midst of unplanned circumstances. This seems rather more natural than supernatural.

Casterbridge itself is more novelistic than romantic, for although the town is somewhat self-contained and isolated from the main stream of English society, it is a particularized and complex community governed by laws which govern society as we know it: the married should stay married, the intimate should marry; a man who has sold his wife is not a fitting mayor, nor is a woman who has lied her way out of a difficulty a proper mayor's wife. The people here interact with each other in complex groupings; they eat and sleep and earn money because they are real people, even if these everyday actions do little to further the central idea of the book.

The Mayor of Casterbridge is, then, a novel leaning somewhat toward romance; Henchard's tragedy is the center of the book, with other elements serving to emphasize it or to increase its poignancy. It is a tragedy brought about by a combination of Chance plus Character--a character flawed by impulsiveness and by a dogged pride which will go to any extreme, even deception, to cover the errors made through impulse. And the effect of the error is tragic isolation, an isolation especially painful to an affectionate man like Henchard, an isolation so strong that it kills him.

Suggested Further Reading

Beach, Joseph Warren. *The Technique of Thomas Hardy.* Chicago, 1922, pp. 134-157.

Chew, Samuel C. *Thomas Hardy: Poet and Novelist.* New York, 1964.

Guerard, Albert J. *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories.* Cambridge, 1949.

Patterson, John. "*The Mayor of Casterbridge* as Tragedy", *Victorian Studies,* III (Dec., 1959), 151-172. This is reprinted with several worthwhile essays on other aspects of Hardy in Prentice-Hall's paperback collection edited by Albert J. Guerard, which is part of the Twentieth Century Views series.

Webster, Harvey Curtis. *On a Darkling Plain: The Art and Thoughts of Thomas Hardy.* Chicago, 1947, especially pp. 147-152.

Teacher Version: The Great Gatsby

I. Subject--Character vs. Society

  A. The Three Worlds of Long Island

  B. Gatsby and his Changing Dreams

    1. His Dreams Fulfilled and Lost

    2. Reunion with Daisy and Destruction of his Dream

    3. Gatsby's Dream as Quest

II. Point of View--Nick's Two Choices

  A. His Commitment to Gatsby

  B. Nick's Honesty with Jordan Questioned

III. Form--Gatsby's Story Framed by Nick's

Like *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* centers on unique characters against a specific social milieu. Though a very short novel, *The Great Gatsby* is extremely complex, and the following discussion which arbitrarily separates Nick Carraway's story from Jay Gatsby's life does so only to present more clearly the novel's double focus on these two men. Actually, the complex interaction of the exotic central character of Gatsby and the youthful observer, Nick, carries with it the main themes of the novel.

I. SUBJECT--CHARACTER VS. SOCIETY

The *subject* of *The Great Gatsby* might be described, on one level, as life in the 1920's, after the disillusionment of World War I, when a sense of liberation from traditional morality allowed bootlegging and the fixing of the World Series, and when people abandoned themselves to a crazy exhilaration seen in wild parties like Gatsby's. The narrator often pictures the life of the times as very attractive, as on page 58* when he sees all the New Yorkers "hurrying toward gayety." But the novel is not merely a book of social comment. Fitzgerald is not so much interested in criticizing this life as he is in exploring its possibilities, in deciding what its values really are. He does this by placing representative characters like Tom Buchanan and Jay Gatsby against a social background, and then examining their interactions.

It will probably be best to begin discussion with an analysis of the society presented in the novel, so that the students are aware of the attitudes represented." Like *The Scarlet Letter*'s re-creation of Puritan life in America, *The Great Gatsby* draws a very particularized picture of its society--of New York, its values, its physical setting--so that the distinction becomes clearer between Gatsby and his society, like Hester's obvious difference from her society. In *The Great Gatsby*, the social background actually consists of three different worlds existing on Long Island--the traditionally rich East Egg, the wasteland of the lower class, and the *nouveau riche* existence of West Egg. Each of these worlds has its virtues; each has its faults.

A. *The Three Worlds of Long Island*

The world of East Egg is rich, leisurely, and full of the so-called best people, but it is also basically insincere and restless. The representatives of East Egg in the novel are, of course, Tom and Daisy Buchanan, who live in an elegant white palace with lawns so expansive that the grass seems to grow into the living room. Their easy life is pictured in Nick's evening with the Buchanans in chapter I, an evening full of light and inconsequential dialogue about candles in summer and the

---

*The page references in this discussion, usually in parentheses, are to the readily available Scribner Library paperback edition of *The Great Gatsby*.

butler's nose. But beneath this cool exterior there is a troubled mood, caused by the very abundance of leisure itself.

The affluence of the society and its lack of direction are most clearly exemplified in Tom Buchanan. The son of a wealthy family, Tom reached his peak playing football at Yale, and ever since, his life has been anticlimatic (6). Now he is overbearing and cruel in his strength, and wants to control other people even physically, as his moving Nick around by the arm like a puppet indicates. Tom's real problem however, is that he lacks an occupation or purpose; he has drifted with Daisy for a year in France, and to occupy his idle time at the present, has taken to casual reading. He has been caught by stale ideas of such things as the supremacy of the white race, and his constant references to the race situation help show both his failure to find any purpose and his rather simple, self-centered outlook on life.

An additional indication of Tom's self-concern, and that factor which causes the undercurrent of suspense between Tom and Daisy on this particular evening, is his many affairs with other women. Although he has trifled with chambermaids of the Santa Barbara Hotel and tries to pick up girls at Gatsby's party, he concentrates most of his attention now on his mistress, Myrtle Wilson. That Daisy is aware of Tom's unfaithfulness is clear, however, and though she dislikes it and taunts Tom, in the end we find that she has thoroughly accepted Tom's world, despite her objections.

At the first of the book, Daisy is presented as an extremely attractive woman. She has learned the social graces of entertaining guests, and looks at them in such a way as to promise "that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see" (9). But more remarkable than even her "warm human magic" (109) is Daisy's voice. Used to characterize her throughout the novel, her voice is exciting and full of compulsion to men (9), musical with an "exhilarating ripple" (86). Nick does not recognize the exact nature of Daisy's voice until later in the book when Gatsby tells him it is full of money (120). Then Daisy, who has seemed so promising and attractive, who appeared to be the innocent wronged wife, and who was somehow better than her surroundings, is carefully put in her place in the snobbish East Egg society. That Daisy is not more worthy than Tom, a point made clearer later in the book, is hinted at in the first scene. She has been talking about her baby--how unhappy she is sure she will be and how terrible everything is now--when she breaks the spell by laughing, "Sophisticated--God, I'm sophisticated" (18). Nick feels the basic insincerity of all she has said, and her membership is tentatively established "in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged" (18), a society with a casual facade, where people are insincere even about their deepest feelings.

The second world pictured in the book (chapter II) is the lower, working class, made up of such people as the Wilsons, Myrtle's sister Catherine, the McKees, and Michaelis. This part of society lives closest to the wasteland of the valley of ashes (23) and is constantly under the stare of the faceless Dr. T. J. Eckleberg, yet it tries pitifully to act like East Egg. Its people live in such places as Wilson's garage, where dust covers everything, and are simple and generally unsuspecting of the truth. Wilson, for example, the husband of another man's "woman, "shows his simple nature in thinking Tom is interested in selling a car; also, simply, Catherine accepts fully the tales about Gatsby and believes that Daisy is a Catholic. In this setting, the most vital person, the person on whom no dust settles (26), is Myrtle, so it can be said that Tom has chosen the best of this world. But her tastes are common, for when she arrives in New York, she buys gossip and movie magazines and wants a mongrel dog because "they're nice to have" (27). The apartment Tom has rented for her is furnished in no better taste, and its photographs of mothers are mistaken for hens sitting on rocks. Throughout the afternoon in the apartment, there is a strange, dreamlike atmosphere, in which the dissolving of milkbones in milk and the breaking of Myrtle's nose seem somehow unremarkable, barely worthy of comment." Incongruities are also apparent in the people; Myrtle, for example, immediately puts on airs about her clothes (31) and the inefficiencies of the lower class (32), despite her own origins in that class. Nick Carraway is at once "enchanted and repelled" (36) by this chaotic situation, but he recognizes that such obvious attempts as Myrtle's to appear better than she is make these people as insincere as the upper class they are trying to imitate.

In dealing with the form of this novel, it might be well to begin here with an analysis of the various parties that occur throughout the story, for it is structured around them. This party in New York is paralleled by the later one in which Gatsby's dream crumbles, and much of the action on Long Island is built around various parties; Gatsby's, Nick's, the Buchanans'. The characters move back and forth to parties from Long Island to New York, between which are the valley of ashes and the mysterious eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleberg.

The other world of the social background, that of West Egg, is less clearly pictured than the first two (chapter III). We find it is a village where a bungalow renting for eighty dollars a month sits next to a tremendous imitation French chateau, probably indicative of the mixed society in West Egg. Here people from the stage and movies have established a colony and are most prevalent, though gamblers and state senators also live in this town. Most West Eggers seem to have newly acquired money; at any rate, it is not inherited as in Tom Buchanan's case. Accordingly, West Egg seems to be the meeting ground for the other two societies, the rich and the poor, for anyone is welcome at Gatsby's parties. The long list of names, so suggestive of the people who bear them makes that clear on pages 61-63. The parties are, of course, most revealing about life in West Egg: people attend with a "simplicity of heart" (41); and come and go "like moths" (39); laughter is "spilled with prodigality" (40); everything seems "significant, elemental, and profound" (47) at these parties; yet the same sense of unreality exists here as it did in New York. Trays "float" at Nick and Jordan (43) and a movie star is a "scarcely human orchid" (106). The New Yorkers accept these parties with wild enthusiasm, as Lucille and her friend demonstrate. East Egg, however, is "carefully on guard against . . . spectroscopic gayety" (45) and even Daisy does not understand the simple pleasures being felt (108). Daisy's disapproval is enough to halt the parties, though people still occasionally show up, hoping for a good time.

Thus, at the first of the book, three worlds are established: one, East Egg, appears to be the most admirable; the lower class is a wasteland; and West Egg seems to be between the two. Yet these first impressions change somewhat as the novel progresses. Through Gatsby, Nick and we find that virture lies not in appearance, but in character.

B. Gatsby and his Changing Dreams

Gatsby's story is presented at intervals throughout the book, and not chronologically. Since this unit is concerned, among other things, with the conventions of the narrative form, it might be well to deal here with what can be called the "convention of withheld information." It would be a good idea to have the students work out the chronology of Gatsby's life, and then the sequence by which we become aware of it. Having chosen his narrative form, Fitzgerald was faced with several problems and alternatives in developing the story of Gatsby's life. Had he chosen straight chronology, we would have had a different story, with the emphasis more on Gatsby. But this is Nick's story as much as -- if not more than -- Gatsby's. Nick's piecemeal discovery of Gatsby's history reinforces his slow moral awakening.

The students should see that Fitzgerald is using a convention of the form for a deliberate artistic purpose. Within the limitations of the form, he has selected that alternative which is most congruent with the intent of the novel as a whole. The convention of withheld information, then, does more than just provide suspense and mystery--although of course it also achieves that purpose on the first level of reading. For Gatsby is, from the beginning, a great mystery, and we want to find out more about him.

There are rumors everywhere about him, that he is related to the Kaiser or is a German spy, that he killed a man or went to Oxford. But the man Nick meets at the first party hardly lives up to these romantic notions. Instead, he clearly stands apart from the other people: "no one swooned backward on Gatsby, and no French bob touched Gatsby's shoulder, and no singing quartets were formed with Gatsby's head for one link" (50). Gatsby is strangely formal, appears to pick his words with care, yet there is "nothing sinister about him" (50). In fact, he seems a warm man; his smile concentrates "on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor" (48). This makes the man all the more interesting, because Gatsby's wild parties end with him standing on the steps in complete isolation, "his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell" (56) to his drunken guests.

As the novel progresses, however, the history behind the man is revealed and involves a dream or wish full of youth and wonder pursued until death. As Gatsby developed, his dreams changed. He began as Jay Gatz of North Dakota, a romantic young man with wild, ill-defined dreams, dreams described as a "universe of ineffable gaudiness" (99) that "were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing" (100). It is nearly impossible to be more specific about the nature and scope of these dreams; perhaps they can best be explained to your students as the visions of success dreamed by all young people. No matter how they are described, however, the dreams did include--evidently among many other things--a vision of the ideal man Gatz wanted to become. As the schedule he compiled for himself shows (174), he worked hard at becoming that ideal man, in much the same way that Franklin in his Autobiography felt it possible to mold himself. For the brighter students it might be possible to introduce here the historical parallel. The ideal of self-improvement and self-molding is integral to the American Dream, and has been from the beginning of the country. Much of the irony of this novel, and one of the most significant themes it develops, is the decay of the American Dream into something of "ineffable gaudiness" and "a vast, vulgar, meretricious beauty." Gatz's abortive attempt to go to Oxford symbolizes the bankruptcy of any ideals other than material ones. Thus, it was not until the rich playboy with a yacht, Dan Cody, happened along that Gatz, now called Gatsby, had his chance to really become the man he dreamed himself to be:

> The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God--a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that--and he must be about His Father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. (99)

After five years with Cody, learning the ways of the leisure class, and having been gypped out of his inheritance, Gatsby was left with a far more valuable thing. As Nick ironically comments, his five years of witnessing vulgarity on Cody's yacht, where drunken women occasionally rubbed champagne in his hair, had left him "with his singularly appropriate education."

1. His Dreams Fulfilled and Lost

When he met Daisy Fay, Gatsby's dreams underwent a considerable change. She was the first "nice" girl he had ever met, yet when he seduced her he felt that it was himself who had been betrayed. Daisy became the embodiment and fulfillment of his dreams now, and though more concrete, his dreams were diminished in size and splendor: "He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God" (112). His dreams had thus become singular, concerned only with Daisy; still, this dream fulfilled was magnificent, and Gatsby was "aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves" (150). Unfortunately, Daisy and Gatsby were separated by the war, and she eventually crumbled under pressures from her family and society, "for Daisy was young, and her artificial world was redolent of orchids" (151). She did resist somewhat, trying to pack and go to Gatsby, and getting drunk on the day before her wedding, claiming that she had changed her mind (77-78), but it all did no good. When Gatsby came back to the States, he made a pilgrimage to Louisville, and as he left the town, he felt he was leaving his dream behind: "he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever" (153). His intent now, a different kind of dream from his original romantic visions, had changed very considerably; now he had to find a way to retrieve the dream life he had already enjoyed, which was so typified by the last afternoon of unity and communication between the lovers (150).

For a while hereafter, Gatsby's history is rather unclear: he became involved with such people as Meyer Wolfsheim and the gangster world of New York, was connected with a bootlegging ring which sold alcohol over drug store counters, and evidently made a great deal of money in a very short time. With that money, he felt he could regain Daisy, so he bought the house in East Egg across the bay from Daisy and Tom's house, where he could see the green light on the end of Daisy's dock, a light that became for him a symbol of his dream. At this point, Nick Carraway came to New York and the "present" time of the novel begins.

2. Reunion with Daisy and Destruction of his Dream

Gatsby's desire has been for five years to retrieve Daisy, and, since she did not come to any of his parties, he arranges the meeting through Nick. Gatsby's emotional response to the reunion goes through three clear phases: he and Daisy are at first both embarrassed and unable to talk, but after Nick has left them alone, Gatsby changes. He glows at the fulfillment of his wish, and unreasoning joy seizes him. Then while showing Daisy around his house and revealing its opulence, his joy turns to wonder. For a while, therefore, everything Gatsby has wanted appears to have come true--Daisy is willing to love him again; she is properly impressed by his house; she will later even declare before her husband that she loves Gatsby. But the reality does not completely fulfill the dream as it should, because the dream is too large. Even that afternoon of reunion

> there must have been moments . . . when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams--not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that had drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart. (97)

Thus, mere reunion with Daisy is not enough, for the existence of her husband destroys the idyllic relationship.

Gatsby's dream, in other words, must be fulfilled absolutely as he imagined it, and to do that he must repeat the past (111). Though Nick tells him it is impossible, Gatsby needs to reestablish the order his life had when his boyish dreams first came true with Daisy. This control of the past over Gatsby relates the book rather closely to both The Scarlet Letter and The Mayor of Casterbridge. The past sin which traps the protagonists in those two books does not exist in The Great Gatsby; instead, the ideal is in the past and Gatsby wants to return to it. Still, as in the other novels read this year, past events have a definite control over the present situation and the protagonist's inability to escape the past's condemnation or attraction largely determines the outcome of each story.

The climax of Gatsby's story and the death of his dream comes on the hot afternoon he has been invited to the Buchanan house. The conflict between Tom and Gatsby then comes out in the open when Daisy tells Gatsby that he always looks cool. Tom's reaction is hypocritical but understandable--he saw nothing wrong with seducing Wilson's wife, but he cannot accept the same move by Gatsby toward him. Tom's problems are complicated even more because he finds he is losing his mistress in addition to his wife when Wilson tells him of his plan to go west; this undoubtedly adds to the fervor of Tom's argument with Daisy. The test of Daisy which will establish Gatsby's hopes comes when the group has reached New York and taken a hotel suite. Small talk, like that seen at the earlier gatherings at Daisy's house and Myrtle's apartment, postpones the climax here too, but its significance is far greater. A marriage being conducted below calls to mind Tom and Daisy's marriage, and eventually leads to Tom's accusation that "Mr. Nobody from Nowhere" (130) is making love to his wife. Ironically, Tom the adulterer now sees himself as the last upholder of decency and the family. When asked to tell Tom that she never loved him and always loved Gatsby, Daisy does so hesitantly but finally must admit that she has loved both men. Gatsby's dream crumbles. For a while, "the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible" (135), but even before Myrtle Wilson is killed, and Gatsby's physical death is thus determined by the woman he loved, his dream has ended. He still hopes to be faithful to Daisy and waits at the Buchanans' house to protect her, but of course we and Nick see her final rejection of Gatsby when she becomes intimate again with Tom (146). She has refused to leave the "secret society" which she has been a part of since the beginning. This scene therefore creates the central irony of the novel: that the object of Gatsby's dream, Daisy, has never been worthy of his devotion, that all his hopes have been futile.

Gatsby's dream has been so magnificent to him, however, that he gives his life for it even after it is gone. By concealing Daisy's name as the driver of the hit and run car, he seals his doom, for Wilson comes to Tom and finds out who owned the yellow car. After he loses Daisy, little time is left for Gatsby to discover the reality which must replace the void left by his dream. Lying in the swimming pool for the first time, he begins to see how concrete and precise reality is, but it seems so unusual to him that it becomes unreal: "he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunshine was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about" (162). Then he is killed by Wilson who thinks he has been his wife's lover.

3. Gatsby's Dream as Quest

This changing dream of Jay Gatsby can thus be seen as the central consideration of the novel, the object which occupies Nick in telling the story. It takes on added significance, however, over what it has as a young man's growing dream, when considered in light of the legendary and mythical elements used by Nick. The symbols used in the novel indicate that Gatsby's attempt to fulfill his dreams is more important than merely being the incident of one man after a beautiful woman. Instead, Gatsby's search for fulfillment is seen as an archetypal quest, a pursuance like that of King Arthur's knights after something as wonderful as the Holy Grail. (The students read Arthurian legends about the Grail in grade nine of this curriculum and thus should be familiar with the stories.)

Gatsby's search is being compared to a society's quest, then. His quest and its goal (Daisy) become symbolic of America, and his tragedy becomes America's tragedy. His quest was a failure because his ideals were false and his goal worthless. In the final paragraphs of the book Fitzgerald makes the symbolic nature of the book clear: Gatsby's capacity for wonder is compared to that of the Dutch sailors with a whole continent before them (compare this figure with Keats' one on "stout Cortez" and recall that Fitzgerald was Keats addict). The tragedy of America is that the virgin continent became the land of East and West Egg, New York, and the valley of ashes; this tragedy is bodied forth in Gatsby's romantic capacity realizing itself in the only way open to him: a bootlegger making quick money to buy back a Daisy Fay. (Fay for both fayerye and Morgan le Fay--the evil element in the Arthurian legends? La Belle Dame Sans Merci of Keats' ballad, who destroys the men who follow her?)

If considered in the light of these Arthurian tales, Gatsby is the prince who has come to rescue his lady love from the castle, though he is a modern knight, hoping to attract her through the opulence and money he knows she loves. Several images throughout the book make the quest theme explicit. Our first picture of Gatsby is when he is looking for something; Nick sees him out on his lawn stretching his arms to Daisy across the bay. Second, that Gatsby is something marvelous is substantiated by his tale of living like a young rajah, collecting jewels, which strikes Nick as patently a hoax until he becomes so convinced of Gatsby's uniqueness that he is ready to ask to see the rubies Gatsby has garnered (95). Third, the watch over Daisy, who is the "incarnation" of his dream (112), becomes a sacred vigil (146) to Gatsby, even though it is an empty one. The quest theme is expressed most specifically when Nick says Gatsby "had committed himself to the following of the grail"--Daisy (149). In addition, Gatsby's house is certainly a modern imitation of a castle and is pictured by Nick as a medieval building (89-90; the story of the man who built the house even makes it into the central dwelling of a feudal manor). The extent of the opulence and wealth Gatsby possesses is stressed as Daisy and Nick tour the house, and his belongings are certainly plentiful.

This scene, incidentally, is an excellent one in which to study Fitzgerald's technique. The concrete object and specific incident are included for symbolic significance as well. The shirts are described as being stacked like bricks (93). Clearly this is the castle of wealth to which Gatsby is going to take his fair damsel. Daisy's crying over the shirts, which are a vast, vulgar, and meretricious symbol of wealth, indicates her own vulgarity, and captures in a moment of time and space the essence of the novel. The scene would be wonderfully comic were it not so nearly tragic.

The story of Gatsby, his achievement of his quest only to find the unworthiness of the Grail, also adds meaning to the wasteland in which the Wilsons live. As we begin to accept the value of Gatsby's dream, we discover that instead of being limited physically to a small valley of ashes, the wasteland extends figuratively over the whole society. No section of Long Island has proven to be any better than another. The East Egg class, which appeared sophisticated, is shown to be false through Daisy's return to Tom and her comfortable home; East Egg thus has no higher or different values than West Egg, or West Egg than New York. The values finally stressed in the book then prove to be not those materialistic ones of society but the hopeful idealistic ones of Gatsby, even though he finally fails and his own house decays to part of the wasteland after his failure (147). The completeness of this wasteland becomes more apparent when we recognize that Dr. Eckleberg's eyes represent the eyes of God (as Michaelis sees on page 160). Even God has become as empty as the land over which he looks. Thus, through the failure of the right values in a weak society, Nick and we come to see the universal nature of the social wasteland.

II. POINT OF VIEW--NICK's TWO CHOICES

If we consider the entire, involved story of Jay Gatsby and Nick Carroway as the central subject of the novel, we should see that it is colored by a unique point-of-view. The Great Gatsby differs technically from The Scarlet Letter and The Mayor of Casterbridge, for instead of viewing the action through an omniscient narrator, we are limited to a specific consciousness, a first-person narrator who is also a participant in the action. We are concerned then as much with analysis of the narrator as we are with the narrative, because the latter is controlled or structured by the former. This novel is, as we have said, as much about Nick as it is about Gatsby, for it is all filtered through his mind after the incidents in the story have actually been over for quite some time. Nick enters the worlds of East Egg and West Egg as a bystander, and his reactions to the Buchanans and Gatsby are important clues to the values expressed in the novel. One of the themes of the novel is the moral education of Nick, who moves from a position of disapproval of Gatsby to his final statement that Gatsby is worth the whole bunch put together. This theme supports the one previously discussed: that Gatsby is the best of the bunch is a sorry commentary on the Way America has fulfilled its promise.

Nick is presented at the beginning with two choices--accepting the society of the Buchanans or the dream of Gatsby--and most of the novel shows him learning about these two possibilities before he decides. His first reaction to the Buchanans and East Egg is confused, for he feels Daisy should leave Tom (21). His first reaction to Gatsby, after he has made an incorrect snap judgment about Gatsby wanting "to determine what share was his of the local heavens" (21), is one of mystification, like all other people's. But as he watches Gatsby on different occasions, his attitude toward him changes in several ways. At the first party, Gatsby does not strike Nick as sinister but as particularly attractive, and Nick feels comfortable at being the last person to leave (54). As he gets to know Gatsby, the wondering continues and Gatsby is at times "simply the proprietor of an elaborate road-house next door" (64) and at other times really the young rajah (67). When Nick learns of Gatsby's desire to obtain Daisy, Gatsby seems more real (79) and Nick is willing to help him, not even being bothered by the simple bribe Gatsby tries to give him (83). As more of Gastby's background comes out, Nick begins to identify with him and feels the same loss of significance that Gatsby felt when his dream fixed on Daisy (112). All of these incidents seem to draw Nick closer to Gatsby's position, yet he also claims to dislike the man (144, 154). Why he has an "unaffected scorn" (2) for Gatsby is unclear, though it is probably because Gatsby depends so much on money and appearance to make his way. Finally, however, Nick becomes fully committed to Gatsby and his dream when he discovers Daisy was driving the car that hit Myrtle. With this complete understanding of Gatsby, he can fully accept Gatsby and yells to him "They're a rotten crowd. . . . You're worth the whole bunch put together" (154). Nick's final reaction to Tom is considerably different; he first hates him but then sees that Tom is actually like a child, only careless of other people's feelings (180).

A. His Commitment to Gatsby

Heareafter, Nick is the only one on Gatsby's side, particularly after his death (165). While Nick tries futilely to get someone to come to the funeral he begins "to have a feeling of defiance, of scornful solidarity between Gatsby and me against them all" (166). His sincerity of commitment might profitably be compared with Wolfsheim's, who knew Gatsby longer yet feels friendship is useless after a man is dead (173) and with Gatsby's father, whose picture of his son has become more real than the son himself (173). Nick's own interpretation of Gatsby's "extraordinary gift for hope" (2) comes on the last page of the book, when he can find precedence for Gatsby's dream only in the wonder of the Dutch sailors who first landed on Long Island and had a whole continent before them, "face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate for man's capacity for wonder" (182). Thus Nick recognizes the importance of Gatsby's dream but sees that the dream was impossible because the object of that dream, Daisy, could never live up to his hopes; he sees that all of Gatsby's dreams, so bright for the future, were actually futile and kept him only in the past. Nick concludes, then, stressing the importance of being able to dream, yet denying the possibility of any particular dream: "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" (182).

B. Nick's Honesty with Jordan Questioned

The use of a character involved in the story to tell what happens should make us wary of trusting him too much. Clearly such a limited point of view creates some questions of the narrator's reliability, the validity of his judgments of other characters, and the accuracy of what he reports. So, we judge Nick as much as we judge what he sees. The most penetrating insight given us on Nick's own character, other than what he learns from Gatsby, is his affair with Jordan Baker, a member of the same East Egg society which he was eventually to call the "foul dust" that "floated in the wake of Gatsby's dreams" (2). The strength of his reaction against that society and in favor of Gatsby is apparent when Nick is able to throw over a woman who has come to mean a great deal to him simply because she is part of that society.

When Nick first meets Jordan she makes a distinct impression on him; he enjoys looking at her (11) and is stunned by her self-sufficiency (9). Early in the book he denies love for her but accepts her for what she is. Knowing of her dishonesty in the golf tournament, he says, "It made no difference to me. Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply--I was casually sorry, and then I forgot" (59), even though all this goes against his own avowed honesty (60). As the novel progresses, Jordan gains more attraction for Nick, and he can even forget the situation of Gatsby and Daisy when he concentrates on her (81). He spends most of the long summer with Jordan (102) and the seriousness of their relationship is expressed fully on page 136. Just after Gatsby has lost Daisy but before Myrtle has been killed, Nick realizes that it is his birthday, that he is thirty, and that the ten years ahead of him look very bleak; it will be "a decade of loneliness." But he obviously feels strongly enough about Jordan for her presence to destroy that fear of being thirty; perhaps he even intends for her to fill the whole coming decade. When later we see Nick turn against the slick East Egg society, and include Jordan in his indictment, we realize he feels very strongly about Gatsby's dream. But perhaps he has not been as honest as he imagines himself to be; the last time he sees Jordan, she accuses him of being the bad driver who showed her to be a bad driver, too; that is, she says he was dishonest with her. Nick's answer is that he is five years too old to lie to himself "and call it honor" (179). He thus is being honest with himself, though perhaps he has betrayed Jordan without explanation. This incident with Jordan can show us, then, Nick's strength of belief at the end of the book, yet it puts him in a paradoxical position: like Gatsby's worthy dreams that cannot be fulfilled, Nick has strong values that do not serve him in all instances.

III. FORM--GATSBY'S STORY FRAMED BY NICK'S

The distinction which has been made between the stories of Gatsby and Nick is, of course, an arbitrary one. Actually, the carefully constructed form of the novel unites the two men so that our central concern is with Nick's and Gatsby's interactions. It does this by putting one story inside the other; that is, Gatsby's story is framed by Nick's.

Gatsby's story should be recognized by the students as a tragedy of isolation, much like Michael Henchard's fate in The Mayor of Casterbridge. No matter how hard Gatsby tries, he is not accepted into the East Egg group he wishes to join. He is rejected not just because he obviously uses the wrong methods--associating with Dan Cody and bootlegging for money--but because he has not the background needed--he is "Mr. Nobody from Nowhere." That the society too is not worthy should also be clear by now and this puts Gatsby's desires in an ironic light. The students thus should note a difference in the tragic pattern from The Mayor of Casterbridge; Gatsby's tragedy is not the result of a personal flaw, like Henchard's self-destructive urge. The interrelation between Gatsby and society is much more complex and paradoxical. His defeat can be seen as the result of his adoption of the ideals of the very society that destroys him. At the same time that it can be said that he is destroyed by that which is best within him--his capacity for the romantic dream--it can also be said that he is destroyed by his blindness--his inability to penetrate the essential hollowness of that which he pursued. In this novel we approach the ambivalence that we find in Greek tragedy, such as in Oedipus.

Nick's story, on the other hand, is more optimistic and takes the familiar form of the novel of education; that is, the book is about Nick's growth and development of a moral sense. He takes the journey east to New York, apparently from unrest (but perhaps also for the practical reason of getting away from the girl rumor has engaged him to). There he learns what values are possible in the world, and chooses between the two, in the pattern already discussed. Having chosen those virtues of youth and wonder, imagination and hope held by the great Gatsby rather than the materialistic, good-time values of most of the society, he takes those values home with him. But he discovers when he returns that the West has always had those same possibilities, for the youth and wonder that he found in Gatsby's dream were present for him in such experiences as coming home from school for Christmas (176-77).

The organization of the novel furthers the unification of the two themes. The first two pages establish Nick's premises and forecast his conclusion. This short passage should be enough to arouse our interest in asking why Nick so disliked the East, and at the same time disliked Gatsby, and why he made the choice between the two. A close analysis of the long paragraph on page 2 thus reveals all the major themes this discussion has mentioned. The students can next be aware that the rest of Chapter I and chapters II and III establish certain opinions about the three worlds on Long Island. Hereafter, the novel presents a simultaneous working out of Gatsby's attempt to regain Daisy, of Nick's discovering Gatsby's background, and of Nick's choice between two views of life. Many flashbacks revealing Gatsby's history are interpersed with the story of the present situation and serve to heighten in the reader the same interest and mystery that Nick discovered in Gatsby's story. Chapter IV, for example, concentrates primarily on revealing some information about both Gatsby and Daisy, while chapter V deals almost totally with their present reunion. Chapter VI shows us Gatsby's earliest history and his latest encounters with Tom, while chapter VII concentrates on the conflict between the two and contains the climax of the book. Chapter VIII once again reveals more information about Gatsby's background, shows Nick's acceptance of his side, and effects Gatsby's death. Chapter IX, of course, provides the proper denouement, the funeral and Nick's conclusions, explaining fully the comments we remember from the first book. A more complete rhetorical analysis of this organization might prove particularly useful in a couple of ways; discussing Nick's reasons for presenting Gatsby's story in bits and pieces would reveal the significance of any particular fact to Nick, according to the emphasis placed upon that information; such an analysis would also allow the students to bring information about persuasive techniques learned in their Rhetoric studies to a work of literature, thus illustrating how heavily fiction sometimes relies on rhetorical methods.

Finally to be discussed is The Great Gatsby's genre as novel, opposing it to the romance The Scarlet Letter and the mixed romance-novel The Mayor of Casterbridge. Both definitions of the genre, novel--given in the teacher versions of Hawthorne's and Hardy's books--apply to The Great Gatsby. Clara Reeve's definition of the novel as a "picture of real life and manners, and of the time in which it was written" clearly describes Fitzgerald's great chronicle of the Twenties. Hawthorne's definition of the novel as aiming "at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience" also describes the sordid life of the Wilsons, the bond-selling routing of Nick's business life, and the bored existence of the Buchanans. There is, in other words, little in the book which is not probable in the real world. However, the book tends somewhat toward romance because the mythical elements ask us to see the events as more significant than just everyday or "ordinary" experience. Overall, then, the three books read this year show the range prose narrative can achieve, from the highly mysterious romance of The Scarlet Letter to the modern novel, The Great Gatsby.

ED015905

TE000 205

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

PROSE FICTION:
Short Story
Novel

Literature Curriculum V
Student Version

The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

ED015905

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

TEST

THE GREAT GATSBY

Literature Curriculum V

Instructions to students:

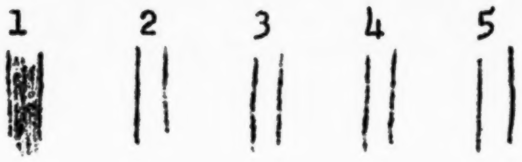
Answers to the questions are to be recorded on the separate answer sheets provided. PLEASE BE SURE TO USE ONLY SIDE A OF THE ANSWER SHEET, THE SIDE THAT HAS ROOM FOR 5 CHOICES.

Use a soft lead pencil (#2 or softer) and completely fill the space between the lines for the response you choose as the correct answer. Your score on this test will be the number of correct answers you mark. There is only one best answer for each item.

Sample test item: Who is the chief executive of the United States Government?
(1) The President
(2) The Secretary of State
(3) The Secretary of Defense
(4) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Since the correct answer is 1, the answer sheet is marked like this:

Sample test item:



TE 000 205

The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

1. In The Great Gatsby, the social background consists of three different worlds existing on Long Island:

    1) the East Egg, typified by the Wilsons; Nick's "noveau riche" world of West Egg; and the center of New York City
    2) the traditionally rich East Egg, the wasteland of the lower class, and the "noveau riche" of West Egg
    3) the re-creation of "life in Paris" in West Egg, Gatsby's sophisticated world in East Egg, and the Buchanans' lower class world
    4) the New York City world typified by Gatsby; Nick Carraway's world on East Egg; and the Buchanan's world on West Egg

2. Who does the following quotation describe: "She was incurably dishonest."?

    1) Daisy
    2) Myrtle
    3) Catherine
    4) Jordan

3. At the end of the novel Henry Gatz's opinion of his son was that he

    1) would do anything or step on anyone to get what he wanted.
    2) had been an idealist who had never been able to fulfill his goal.
    3) would not have wanted his father to come to his funeral.
    4) had definite aims in life and would have fulfilled these objectives.

4. Why was it important to Gatsby to earn a great deal of money in a short time?

    1) He wanted to impress his friend Nick.
    2) He desired to be elevated above the gangster world.
    3) He needed capital to become big in the bootlegging ring.
    4) He felt that he could regain Daisy.

5. The last lines of the novel: "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." can best be interpreted as

    1) being able to dream is important, but there is no possibility in any particular dream coming true.
    2) people will have to go against the main current, and when they do, their past events will catch up with them.
    3) the boats (which are sailboats) are symbolic of the rich, and even the rich have to return to their pasts.
    4) participants of any society are constantly reminded of their past and forced to re-live part of it.

6. Tom's statement, "By God, I may be old fashioned in my ideas, but women run around too much these days to suit me," is ironic because he is

   1) completely unaware that his own wife could be running around.
   2) confident that the women of his society do not run around.
   3) condemning women for doing exactly what he is doing.
   4) actually old-fashioned in all of his views about society.

7. The Great Gatsby is similar to The Scarlet Letter and The Mayor of Casterbridge in that

   1) past events have a definite control over the present situation, and the protagonist's inability to escape the past's condemnation or attraction largely determines the outcome of each story.
   2) a past sin (which had occurred before the novel begins) traps the protagonist in each of these three novels; this sin eventually destroys each individual.
   3) each of the three novels has the same conflict, man versus a supreme being or man's incapacity to accept or adjust to the ruling of an intangible force.
   4) a past sin produces a hypocritical situation where the protagonist is basically good, but appears to society as a sinner because of the situation, and therefore the protagonist cannot rise above this image at the end of the novel.

8. Gatsby's dreams included--among other things--a vision of

   1) a knowledge of the unreality of reality.
   2) a world of complete luxury and freedom.
   3) the ideal man Gatsby wanted to become.
   4) himself completely isolated from society.

9. The fact that Jordan encouraged Daisy to marry Tom shows the reader that Jordan

   1) was more interested in wealth and position than true happiness.
   2) liked Tom better than Gatsby because he was a better businessman.
   3) had romantic inclinations and plans for Gatsby and herself.
   4) believed that Daisy should marry while she had a chance and not wait around.

10) One of the themes of the novel is the moral education of Nick, who moves from a position of

   1) disapproval of Tom and Daisy Buchanan to a feeling of compassionate and sympathetic understanding.
   2) mystification about Jay Gatsby to a feeling of pity for a man who has lost his values in society.
   3) disapproval of Gatsby to the idea that Gatsby is worth the whole bunch put together.
   4) identity with Gatsby to a final reaction that Gatsby is pretentious and intolerable.

11. Which of the following themes is present in all three novels, The Scarlet Letter, The Mayor of Casterbridge, and The Great Gatsby?

    1) The past lives of various characters cannot be forgotten, but control, even ruin, their lives.
    2) The protagonist builds his entire life around a dream which collapses in the end.
    3) Each of the three main characters has a secret, romantic longing for something more than his settled way of life.
    4) The customs of the societies of each novel blunt each of the protagonists' ability to see reality.

12. On a superficial reading level Fitzgerald provides the reader with

    1) Nick's moral awakening.
    2) suspense and mystery.
    3) moral ambiguity.
    4) a realistic parable.

13. The setting for Jay Gatsby's story is

    1) "the Gay Nineties".
    2) "the Roaring Twenties".
    3) "the Swing Era".
    4) "the Great Depression".

14. The only thing that Nick Carroway remembered hearing about Jordan Baker before he met her was that she cheated at golf. Why did he remember just this one thing?

    1) He was concerned about cheating at golf because this game was his favorite sport.
    2) He disapproved strongly of what she had done because she had been dishonest
    3) He was impressed because she was clever enough to manipulate the figures and win.
    4) He remembered seeing her picture in the newspaper when she was caught for her dishonesty.

15. Which of the following conventions of the narrative form is used in presenting Gatsby's story? - the convention of

    1) symbolic fable
    2) straight chronology
    3) foreshadowing
    4) withheld information

16. What is Fitzgerald's purpose in having Nick reveal Gatsby's story through a flashback technique?

   1) Nick revealed only the parts of Gatsby's past that is necessary for total understanding of the novel.
   2) This technique allows Nick to concentrate on the present which is much more significant than anything in the past.
   3) The similar pattern of events in Gatsby's past allowed Nick to organize them through this technique.
   4) This technique allows Nick to reveal Gatsby's past slowly so that the reader is not overwhelmed by these incidents.

17. The central irony of the entire novel is that

   1) Daisy, the object of Gatsby's dream, has never been worthy of his devotion, and therefore his hopes have been futile.
   2) Gatsby secretly condemns and eventually accuses Buchanan of lacking the moral fortitude which he himself does not possess.
   3) Daisy, who appears strong willed, has never been able to escape the "secret society" of which she has always been a part.
   4) Nick, who condemns the values of East Egg society, participates in this social wasteland.

18. Fitzgerald carefully established the background and character of Nick at the beginning of the novel in order to make the reader aware of

   1) the fact that from the beginning Nick thinks the "civilization is going to pieces".
   2) why Nick's weak character allows Gatsby to manipulate him for the purpose of trying to regain Daisy.
   3) Nick's basic philosophy and to make the reader understand why he makes the choices that he does later in the novel.
   4) the mood of restless seeking to find a new social life to hide his unacceptable past.

19. The Great Gatsby is told through a first person narrator point of view, which is different from the usual in that the narrator is

   1) adds no opinions of his own.
   2) limited in knowledge of characters.
   3) an omniscient or subjective narrator.
   4) a participant in the action.

20. Daisy allowed Gatsby to assume the blame for the accident because

   1) he was actually the one responsible and wanted to face up to his deed.
   2) she cared more about her welfare than about Gatsby or anyone else.
   3) Tom was forcing Daisy to let Gatsby be the guilty person.
   4) Tom was the one who was driving, and she wanted to protect her husband.

21. One of the most significant themes the novel develops is

    1) the decay of the American Dream into something gaudy and vulgar.
    2) the idea of mass pressure to make a man bow down to conformity.
    3) man's individual search for truth and individualism in society.
    4) man has a romantic longing for something more than the daily rounds of our own lives.

22. What literary device has the author employed in the incident in which the list of celebrities who visited Gatsby's house during the summer had been jotted down on an old timetable?

    1) irony
    2) foreshadowing
    3) symbolism
    4) prophetic

23. Fitzgerald's choice of narrative form places the emphasis of the story on

    1) Nick and Gatsby.
    2) Gatsby and Daisy.
    3) Daisy and Nick.
    4) Tom and Nick.

24. During the hot afternoon when Gatsby has been invited to the Buchanan house, the reader realizes that

    1) Daisy is a hypocrite and unable to face the love of Jay or Tom.
    2) Gatsby has no control over his actions and therefore, ruins his chances of winning Daisy.
    3) Daisy's past sin has caught up with her and now will destroy her.
    4) Gatsby's dream dies and therefore produces the climax of his story.

25. While The Great Gatsby would not be classed as a satire, one place where Fitzgerald satirizes is in his discussion of

    1) Wolfsheim and Klipspringer using Gatsby.
    2) Henry Gatz's view of his son.
    3) Nick being dishonest with Jordan.
    4) Tom Buchanan and his position in society.

26. What was the green light on the end of Daisy's dock symbolic of?

    1) Daisy's innocence
    2) Tom's unfaithfulness
    3) Gatsby's dream
    4) affluent society

27. The scene where Daisy and Nick tour Gatsby's house and are constantly reminded of Gatsby's wealth clearly shows Fitzgerald's technique: presentation of

    1) a moral by using vivid description with underlying symbolic implications.
    2) de-personalization of characters and setting which suggests an allegory.
    3) concrete objects and specific incidents for vivid description and symbolic significance.
    4) descriptive details which help to lift the characters above sentimentality.

28. Through an evaluation of the tragic pattern, the reader can see that Gatsby's tragedy is

    1) the result of a personal flaw, which is the self-destructive urge.
    2) his lack of development of a moral capacity for understanding.
    3) his pride in his dream and over-confident understanding of society.
    4) his adoption of the ideals of the very society that destroys him.

29. In general, what type of novel is The Great Gatsby?

    1) mysterious romance
    2) mythical tale
    3) realistic novel
    4) moralistic romance

30. Gatsby's search for fulfillment of his dream was a failure because

    1) his ideals were false and his goal was worthless.
    2) he lived in a world of unreality and would not face reality.
    3) the emphasis was on the incident of one man after a beautiful woman.
    4) he was not sincere in putting all his effort toward the goal.

31. Tom Buchanan's real problem in life is both his

    1) lack of understanding of what life is and his eagerness to make a "good" impression at the parties he attends.
    2) disapproval of the upper class and values which the class has set for itself.
    3) lack of ability to communicate with his wife and his huge extravagance in having parties.
    4) failure to find any purpose and his rather simple, self-centered outlook on life.

32. In this novel Nick is concerned with telling the story of the

1) moral education of himself.
2) changing dream of Jay Gatsby.
3) decaying values of East Egg society.
4) recognition of Daisy's unworthiness.

33. Who was given the following advice: "Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages you've had."?

1) Gatsby
2) Daisy
3) Nick
4) Tom

34. Why did Gatsby's father carry around an old copy of a book, Hopalong Cassidy, with Gatsby's writing on the fly-leaf?

1) He wanted to have it buried with Gatsby because Jay had always admired this famous cowboy.
2) He felt that by holding on to one of Gatsby's childhood treasures, he could be closer to his son.
3) He wanted to remember Gatsby as a self-disciplined and enthusiastic, young boy.
4) The flyleaf contained a message that Gatsby had written to his father when he was a small boy

35. From the quotation: "he (Gatsby) found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunshine was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about" the reader sees that Gatsby

1) recognizes Daisy's false values and for the first time he is able to objectively evaluate her.
2) is not able to appreciate anything which an affluent society has not produced or ordered.
3) almost begins to accept reality, but it is such an abrupt awakening that it becomes unreal.
4) finally recognizes the hypocrisy underlying the values of the East Egg society.

36. At the end of the novel the reader sees Tom Buchanan as

1) possessing ethical values which are far greater than any material objects he has ever known.
2) being indirectly responsible for Gatsby's death by telling Wilson the yellow car was his (Gatsby's).
3) a pathetic character who has been exposed to such a small quantity of human life that he is disappointed in it.
4) trying to establish a better relationship between his wife and himself so that they can have a brighter future.

37. On their first meeting Daisy described herself to Tom by saying that she was

1) a beautiful little foolish girl.
2) a member of a distinguished secret society.
3) pretty cynical about everything.
4) a completely self-sufficient person.

38. The one thing that all the characters in the novel have in common is that they all

1) are seeking happiness which they don't have.
2) are striving to fulfill a dream that they have.
3) ruin other's lives and then retreat back to their money.
4) suffer the loss of a loved one sometime in the novel.

39. At the end of the novel Nick "felt a certain shame for Gatsby" because

1) Daisy and Tom Buchanan had deceived, then shunned Gatsby.
2) Gatsby had been killed at the peak of his career.
3) he was partly responsible for his accidental death.
4) none of his party "friends" would come to his funeral.

40. "Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone, just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had" was the advice Nick received from his father. As a result of these words Nick was inclined to

1) listen intently to his friends.
2) reserve all his judgments.
3) instantly approve of all people.
4) appear snobbish at times.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

The Mayor of Casterbridge

Literature Curriculum V

Instructions to students:

Answers to the questions are to be recorded on the separate answer sheets provided. PLEASE BE SURE TO USE ONLY SIDE A OF THE ANSWER SHEET, THE SIDE THAT HAS ROOM FOR 5 CHOICES.

Use a soft lead pencil (#2 or softer) and completely fill the space between the lines for the response you choose as the correct answer. Your score on this test will be the number of correct answers you mark. There in only one best answer for each item.

Sample test item: Who is the chief executive of the United States Government?
(1) The President
(2) The Secretary of State
(3) The Secretary of Defense
(4) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Since the correct answer is 1, the answer sheet is marked like this:

Sample test item: 1 2 3 4 5

The Project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

TE 000 205

The Mayor of Casterbridge

1. In what part of England does this novel begin?

   1) London
   2) Berkshire
   3) Hampstead Heath
   4) Upper Wessex

2. On what specific day does the novel begin?

   1) Boxing Day
   2) Candlemas
   3) Fair Day
   4) Guy Fawkes Day

3. After he has finished eating and gotten somewhat drunk, what does Michael first talk about to everybody present?

   1) the evils of marrying young
   2) the difficulties of supporting young children
   3) the difficult life of a hay-trusser
   4) the impossibility of finding suitable accommodation in this village

4. When Susan returns to the Fair many years later, who is the only person she still recognizes there?

   1) the man who had given them directions
   2) the woman who had told them about the lack of work in the area
   3) the old woman selling furmity
   4) the young boy who had told them where the Fair was

5. At the remark about poor people having to eat bad bread, "Henchard's face darkened. There was temper under the thin bland surface--the temper which, artificially intensified, had banished a wife nearly a score of years before." What does Hardy mean by "artificially intensified"?

   1) by anger
   2) by alcohol
   3) by excess of food
   4) by his position as Mayor

6. When does Susan get her first glimpse of her husband after the long estrangement?

   1) at a public dinner, at which Henchard occupies the Mayor's chair
   2) As Susan passes by his house, she sees Henchard in his dining room.
   3) Henchard comes to the Three Mariners to talk to Farfrae.
   4) Susan sees Henchard at the market, on the first morning after her arrival with Elizabeth-Jane.

7. Very soon after they first meet, what gift does Farfrae make to Henchard?
   1) a new instrument for trussing hay
   2) a new braking system for freight wagons
   3) a method of restoring corn
   4) a method of storing hay

8. Which of the following is one of the principal reasons why Henchard is so attracted to Farfrae during the early part of their acquaintance?

   1) Henchard is lonely.
   2) Farfrae is extremely friendly.
   3) They both meet when they are drunk, and hence are happy together.
   4) Henchard is looking for a manager for his farm.

9. In which country had the Newson family lived after leaving England?

   1) the United States
   2) Tahiti
   3) the British West Indies
   4) Canada

10. Where do Susan and Henchard meet for the first time after their estrangement?

    1) at Henchard's home
    2) at the Roman amphitheatre just outside Casterbridge
    3) at the Three Mariners
    4) at the second bridge

11. "'They are both in a very melancholy position, and that's true!' murmured Donald." What persons is Donald referring to as he talks to Henchard?

    1) Lucetta and Susan
    2) Susan and Elizabeth-Jane
    3) himself and Henchard
    4) Henchard and Jopp

12. Henchard feels that marrying "Mrs. Newson" will lower the public opinion of him because:

    1) He has always previously avoided talking of women.
    2) Mrs. Newson is such a comparatively humble women.
    3) He had sworn never to marry.
    4) He has always said that he despised women.

13. The true situation of Susan and Henchard when they are married at Casterbridge is known by which one of the following groups of people?

    1) Susan, Henchard, and Elizabeth-Jane
    2) Farfrae, Henchard, Susan, and Elizabeth-Jane
    3) Henchard, Farfrae, and Susan
    4) Farfrae, Henchard, Susan, and the villagers of Weydon-Priors

14. The first small break in the Henchard-Farfrae friendship was caused by

    1) Henchard's pride being hurt
    2) Farfrae's attempt to take over the estate
    3) Elizabeth-Jane's friendliness with Farfrae
    4) Farfrae's knowledge of Henchard's secret

15. When Henchard first tells Elizabeth-Jane the truth about her parents, why does he not tell her the whole truth?

    1) because he had promised Susan he would not tell
    2) because of the possible scandal in the neighborhood
    3) because he showed respect for Elizabeth-Jane's sex and youth
    4) because he fears the reactions of the townspeople

16. Reminiscing, Henchard feels that there was one specific occurrence, from the time of which his luck has changed for the worse. That occurrence was

    1) the arrival of Farfrae at Casterbridge
    2) the arrival of Susan and Elizabeth-Jane at Casterbridge
    3) the hiring of Farfrae as Henchard's business manager
    4) the dismissal of Farfrae

17. At his first meeting with Lucetta, Farfrae is asked to sit down: "He hesitated, looked at the chair, thought there was no danger in it (though there was), and sat down." Which of the following most closely expresses what the "danger" is?

    1) that Farfrae might be strongly attracted to Lucetta if he gets to know her
    2) that Lucetta might get to know of Henchard's past from Farfrae
    3) that Lucetta might reveal her own past to Farfrae
    4) that Lucetta might get to know of Elizabeth-Jane's background from Farfrae

18. When Farfrae first visits Lucetta, what serves especially to attract her to him?

    1) his comments about his home-land
    2) their talk about being kind to servants
    3) his hiring of a young man who was about to be separated from his loved one
    4) his physical appearance

19. What is the reason for Lucetta and Farfrae's first meeting?

    1) He had come to see Lucetta about some land she wanted to buy.
    2) He had come to Lucetta's home to inquire about her former acquaintances.
    3) Farfrae had been sent by Henchard to see Lucetta.
    4) He had really come to call on Elizabeth-Jane.

20. Who says these words: "I wonder if it can be that somebody has been roasting a waxen image of me, or stirring an unholy brew to confound me"?

    1) Elizabeth-Jane
    2) Jopp
    3) Farfrae
    4) Henchard

21. In what connection are the above words said?

    1) Jopp's failures to secure permanent employment
    2) Farfrae's inability to regain Henchard's friendship
    3) Henchard's financial disaster because of the weather
    4) Elizabeth-Jane's realization that Farfrae is no longer interested in her.

22. "On that day--almost at that minute--he passed the ridge of prosperity and honour, and began to descend rapidly on the other side." Which occurrence in Henchard's life do these words describe?

    1) the revelations in court by the furmity woman
    2) Lucetta's revelation of her marriage to Farfrae
    3) his saving Lucetta from the bull
    4) the accident between Farfrae's wagon and Henchard's

23. After all of Henchard's belongings have been sold by auction, where does he go to live?

    1) Jopp's cottage
    2) the Three Mariners
    3) High Place Hall
    4) a small cottage he rents for himself

24. Why does Jopp not carry Lucetta's letters directly from Henchard to Lucetta?

    1) It is too late at night, so he waits till next morning.
    2) He is afraid that, if he goes tonight when Farfrae will certainly be at home, he will meet him.
    3) He meets Mother Cuxsom and Nance Mockridge, and they convince him to stop off at a tavern for a few minutes.
    4) In an attempt to show Henchard that he is now no longer socially below him, he purposely puts off till the next morning the task Henchard had requested of him.

25. What action does Henchard see a Farfrae servant perform, indicating that there has been a death (Lucetta's) in the household?

    1) The servant raises the blinds.
    2) The servant puts a small piece of black cloth on the door.
    3) The servant opens the front door wide and leaves it so.
    4) The servant takes the piece of cloth off the knocker.

26. What prevents Henchard from committing suicide?

    1) A prayer instinctively comes to his lips, as he stands on the second bridge.
    2) He hears the laughter of children, as he stand by Durnover Hole.
    3) He accidentally fingers a ring given him by Susan, as he stands on the second bridge.
    4) He sees in the water a figure resembling himself, as he stands by Ten Hatches Hole.

27. What is the final incident which drives Henchard from Casterbridge?

1) Newson's return
2) Elizabeth-Jane's lack of love for him
3) Farfrae's lack of trust in him
4) his passing by Susan's grave

28. What act of penance does Henchard perform after leaving Casterbridge?

1) He goes back to Weydon-Priors.
2) He prays more than he ever has before.
3) He swears never to disturb the life of any other human being.
4) He passionately asks God to give peace and prosperity to all those whom he has ever wronged.

29. What controls most of Farfrae's actions?

1) intuition
2) sentiment
3) reason
4) apprehension

30. Which of the following most closely describes what seems to be the main function of Hardy's country folk?

1) They make telling comments on the action and the main characters.
2) They set the mood and tone of the story.
3) They provide background and "local color."
4) They frequently discuss alcoholism.

31. Which of the following best describes the subject of this novel?

1) Farfrae's rise to eminence
2) Henchard's rise and fall from fortune following the sale of his wife
3) Henchard's ruin because of his tragic flaw
4) Farfrae's success because of extraordinary personal qualities

32. The Mayor of Casterbridge is essentially a book about

1) loneliness
2) faith
3) flight
4) hope

33. Hardy appears to be saying that man's destiny is determined by

1) fate
2) reason
3) coincidence
4) accident

34. This novel can be said to center on an emphatic contrast between which pair of characters?

1) Henchard and Susan
2) Farfrae and Lucetta
3) Henchard and Farfrae
4) Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae

35. There are very close parallels between the lives of which pair of characters?

1) Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane
2) Elizabeth-Jane and Susan
3) Lucetta and Henchard
4) Susan and Lucetta

36. The point of view Hardy has used is

1) first person narrator
2) third person narrator
3) third person narrator, with limited omniscience
4) omniscient narrator

37. "Henchard's tragedy is brought about by a combination of ________ plus ________" Which pair of words best fits the quotation?

1) chance plus character
2) fate plus reason
3) intuition plus character
4) intuition plus fate

38. Who is it who says, on several occasions, words to the effect that "some power is working against me"?

1) Susan
2) Elizabeth-Jane
3) Lucetta
4) Henchard

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

The Scarlet Letter

Literature Curriculum V

Instructions to students:

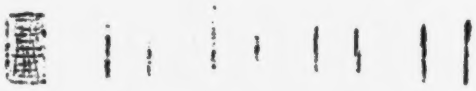
Answers to the questions are to be recorded on the separate answer sheets provided. PLEASE BE SURE TO USE ONLY SIDE A OF THE ANSWER SHEET, THE SIDE THAT HAS ROOM FOR 5 CHOICES.

Use a soft lead pencil (#2 or softer) and completely fill the space between the lines for the response you choose as the correct answer. Your score on this test will be the number of correct answers you mark. There is only one best answer for each item.

Sample test item: Who is the chief executive of the United States Government?
(1) The President
(2) The Secretary of State
(3) The Secretary of Defense
(4) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Since the correct answer is 1, the answer sheet is marked like this:

Sample test item: 1 2 3 4 5



TE 000 205

The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

The Scarlet Letter

1. What is the major theme of The Scarlet Letter?

   1) The reasons that sin exists in the world.
   2) The effect of sin on people's lives.
   3) The effects of sin on innocent people.
   4) The necessity of sin in an imperfect world.

2. What is the best description of the narrator's point of view?

   1) puritanic
   2) critical of Puritan attitudes
   3) insistent that the reader sympathize with Hester
   4) somewhat ambiguous and ironic

3. What do the narrator's comments on the Puritan way of life reveal about his attitude toward it?

   1) Puritanism is the only way to salvation.
   2) Puritanism is only for those chosen by God.
   3) Puritanism is not always admirable.
   4) Puritanism is wrong.

4. What was the major source of justification the Puritans used for their methods of public punishment?

   1) It was instructive to the person being punished.
   2) It served as an object lesson to the people watching.
   3) From their viewpoint, punishment was part of religion.
   4) It was and is provided for in the Christian doctrine.

5. The Scarlet Letter is most often classified as a "romance" by literary critics. What distinguishes a romance from a novel?

   1) A novel purposely uses unreal characters, settings, or actions whereas a romance makes it realistic.
   2) A romance involves a love affair and a novel may or may not.
   3) A novel is more lengthy than a romance and is based upon a real incident not fictitious.
   4) A novel is realistic whereas a romance involves strange things that are made to look like truth.

6. The unhappy events of The Scarlet Letter are intended to show the result of

   1) unavoidable destiny, or fate.
   2) sin and human weakness.
   3) .the operation of free will.
   4) passion in the wilderness.

7. Why is Hester's "A" the most important symbol in the story?

   1) It is the central symbol for a sin which can never be forgiven.
   2) It is a symbol the meaning of which is shared by Hester and Dimmesdale.
   3) The "A" as a symbol goes through shifts of meaning all of which are significant.
   4) The effect of the "A" on Pearl is central to the meaning of the book.

8. At the beginning of the story, whose opinion of the "A" is described by ". . .it meant Able; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a women's strength. . ."?

   1) Arthur Dimmesdale
   2) Chillingworth
   3) the community
   4) the Indians

9. One example of Hawthorne's use of supernaturalism in the story is

   1) the fiery meteor, that traced the letter "A", in the night sky.
   2) Mr. Surveyor Pue's putting the "A" packet in the Custom House.
   3) the first scaffold scene with Hester and Chillingworth.
   4) Pearl's statement that she was plucked from the rose bush beside the prison door.

10. What did the sexton think when he found Dimmesdale's glove on the scaffold?

    1) that Dimmesdale had lost his glove.
    2) that the glove was a curse of the Black Man and Mistress Hibbens.
    3) that Satan had dropped it there.
    4) that it was proof of Dimmesdale's guilt.

11. With what does Pearl associate her mother's wearing of the scarlet "A"?

    1) her own beautifully sewn scarlet dresses
    2) the minister's keeping his hand over his heart.
    3) her mother's connection with the Black Man.
    4) Dimmesdale's close companionship with Chillingworth

12. What figurative meaning did Hawthorne have in mind in the chapter title, "The Leech"?

    1) Chillingworth's close association with Dimmesdale
    2) Pearl's close association with Mistress Hibbens
    3) Hester's insistence that Pearl always accompany her
    4) Dimmesdale's clinging to his faith

13. When Hester was released from prison, why did she "not flee"?

    1) She felt she owed a loyalty to Dimmesdale.
    2) She hoped Chillingworth would admit to being her husband and protect her.
    3) She believed she had to stay and work out her punishment.
    4) She wanted to give Pearl a chance to know her father.

14. In Chapter One, Hawthorne hopes the rose beside the prison door will "symbolize some sweet moral blossom." What is the most logical interpretation of these words in terms of the whole story?

    1) Its red color gains significance from Hester's "A" and thus represents sin.
    2) Its meaning is gradually revealed as symbolizing natural love as contrasted to strict morality.
    3) Its meaning clearly demonstrates that Hawthorne meant all along to condone Hester's action as that of a free, loving woman.
    4) The rose symbolizes Hester herself, born to bloom and find ultimate beauty in a dark place.

15. Why is Governor Bellingham's "Good Master Dimmesdale, the responsibility of this woman's soul lies greatly with you," an example of dramatic irony?

    1) Dimmesdale's responsibility goes further than that of a pastor.
    2) His responsibility actually extends to the whole community.
    3) Dimmesdale alone is responsible for her punishment.
    4) No one can be responsible for another's soul.

16. What motivates Chillingworth's statement to Hester in the prison, "Sooner or later, he must needs be mine!"

    1) jealousy of Hester's unknown lover who won what he could not win
    2) He does not really know what motivates him.
    3) his Puritan sense of righteousness
    4) a diabolical desire for vengeance

17. Hawthorne's symbolic use of light (sunshine) and dark (shadow) is used for what purpose?

    1) to equate light with good and dark with evil
    2) to equate light with Hester and dark with the Puritan community
    3) to equate light with innocence and youth, and dark with experience and old age
    4) There are no single equivalents for light and dark.

18. Why does Hester tell Chillingworth during their muting by the sea, "It lies not in the pleasure of the magistrates to take off this badge . . . were I worthy to be quit of it, it would fall away of its own nature, or be transformed into something that should speak a different purport"?

    1) she has no confidence in government officials.
    2) she believes witchcraft will be the only way she will be rid of the Scarlet Letter.
    3) she thinks the burden will be lifted by passage of time.
    4) she has accepted her guilt and the fact that she alone must bear it.

19. When did Hester's shame, represented by the scarlet letter she wore, burn most painfully?

    1) when Dimmesdale looked at it
    2) when members of the community stared at it or made remarks
    3) when an extra awareness made her conscious that others whom she met had also sinned
    4) when she covered it with her hand.

20. Why did Hester name her daughter Pearl?

    1) because something beautiful had come out of sin.
    2) because Pearl had been purchased with all she had
    3) because the child's personality glowed with a calm lustre
    4) because the name represented innocence and goodness

21. What was the nature of the fear Hester felt concerning Pearl?

    1) She was afraid Pearl would be harmed by Chillingworth.
    2) She was afraid that discipline would destry Pearl's unique personality.
    3) She was afraid that Pearl's origin in sin would make her bad too.
    4) She was afraid Pearl would turn against her when she understood the meaning of the scarlet letter.

22. Which of the statements below seems to explain best Hawthorne's intentions in the creation of Pearl's character and personality?

    1) The townspeople: ". . . little Pearl was a demon offspring. . ."
    2) The Governor: ". . . we might have judged that such a child's mother must needs be a scarlet woman. . ."
    3) Dimmesdale: ". . . the one blessing of her life! . . . for a retribution too."
    4) Mr. Wilson: ". . . one of those naughty elfs or fairies . . ."

23. Which of Pearl's traits makes her more of a symbol than a real person?

    1) her changeable nature, first gay, then moody
    2) her intuitive abiltiy to make revealing statements at significant times
    3) her outlandish clothing and her nasty, unchildlike temper
    4) her love of sunshine and flowers, the forest and the brook

24. What primary purpose does Mistress Hibbens, "who, a few years later, was executed as a witch," serve in The Scarlet Letter?

    1) to create suspense, because she alone knows who Pearl's father is.
    2) as contrast, because she enjoys evil secretly while Hester suffers open shame.
    3) to underline the ever-present temptation to evil that exists in any community.
    4) to remind us that the forest represents evil passions in the service of Satan

25. One of the key words in The Scarlet Letter is "shame." Which interpretation of this word is the most valid in the book?

    1) A person's shame is only shame if it is know to others.
    2) Woman's shame is worse than man's because she cannot hide it.
    3) Shame can only destroy, it cannot serve a useful purpose.
    4) Shame only has meaning in a moral world.

26. Why is the presence of a tapestry portraying David and Bathsheba in Dimmesdale's study ironic?

    1) The luxury of the tapestry is not consistent with Puritan views on ornament.
    2) The tapestry depicts a story of adultery.
    3) The tapestry is used to shut out the light and the outside world.
    4) The tapestry portrays a warrior-priest, the opposite of Dimmesdale.

27. How does Chillingworth gain the knowledge that Dimmesdale is Hester's seducer?

    1) Chillingworth guesses from hints given by Hester in the prison.
    2) Chilingworth finds a specific admission of guilt in Dimmesdale's study.
    3) Chillingworth's knowledge grows intuitively throughout the book.
    4) Chillingworth does not know the truth until Dimmesdale admits it on the scaffold.

28. Hawthorne uses plant or flower symbols in numerous ways throughout the book. Which of these uses underlines Hester's belief in personified evil at work in her life?

    1) the ugly, tortured herb-plants collected by Chillingworth
    2) the flowers Pearl weaves for her crown in the forest.
    3) the rose growing beside the prison door
    4) the vines and creepers that hang down from the forest trees

29. What attitude did Hester adopt toward Dimmesdale after she and Pearl met him at the scaffold after Governor Winthrop's death?

    1) She was angry because Dimmesdale did not agree to stand with them in the daylight.
    2) She began to believe that Dimmesdale was weak and needed her help.
    3) She began to understand Chillingworth's purpose and approved of it.
    4) She realized she still loved Dimmesdale and demanded that he love Pearl.

30. Hester says to Dimmesdale: "But a lie is never good." In what way did she believe she had lied?

    1) She had not named Chillingworth as her husband to Dimmesdale.
    2) She had not named Dimmesdale as her seducer to Chillingworth.
    3) She had not told Pearl the truth about the scarlet letter.
    4) She had not admitted her continuing love for Dimmesdale.

31. Which of Pearl's acts in the forest underlines symbolically a truth Hester would like to forget or ignore?

    1) Pearl's refusal to cross the brook that is a divide between two worlds
    2) Pearl's command that Hester come and take up the "A" herself
    3) Pearl's fit,, which makes one think she is a witch, when she sees Hester without the "A"
    4) Pearl's refusal to kiss Dimmesdale, and her washing off his kiss.

32. What did the description of a "New England Holiday" tell you about the needs of the inhabitants of Salem?

    1) They needed to have a strong central figure head as governor.
    2) They declared a day a holiday for almost any reason at all.
    3) They wanted to be liked by the government.
    4) They welcomed the relief from their ridgid way of life.

33. For what qualities does the narrator admire the Puritans of the time of this story?

    1) their ability to make a place for themselves in an alien world
    2) their strict moral code that punished all who deviated from it
    3) their eventual willingness to change with the times
    4) their stabiltiy and integrity

34. What accounts for the fact that Pearl could hardly recognize Dimmesdale on the morning of his election sermon and that Hester felt he had withdrawn from their mutual world?

    1) He is playing a role because of the dignitaries that surround him.
    2) He has cut himself off from Hester and Pearl entirely.
    3) He has accepted the necessity to admit his sin in order to be saved.
    4) His mind is so full of his sermon that he cannot think of anything else.

35. What does the narrator say was the effect of Pearl's kissing Dimmesdale on the scaffold?

    1) The kiss released Dimmesdale's fear of admitting his guilt.
    2) The kiss showed Dimmesdale that Pearl had forgiven him for his neglect
    3) The kiss released Pearl so that she could grow up a real women
    4) The kiss caused Dimmesdale to reveal the stigma on his breast

36. With what certainty in his own mind does Dimmesdale die?

    1) He knows that God send afflication only in order to save the soul.
    2) He knows that he and Hester will meet and be together in eternity.
    3) He knows that God will, in time, forgive Chillingworth.
    4) He knows that his sermon was a parable all the people would finally understand.

37. What lesson does Hester finally learn?

    1) that true repentance requires admission and acceptance of the fact of sin
    2) that acts of love do indeed have their own consecration.
    3) that her sin is the fault of woman's dependent position in society
    4) that her adultery violated the reverence she should have had for Dimmesdale's soul

38. At the end of the story, Hawthorne deliberately refuses to say explicitly that Dimmesdale revealed an "A" on his breast just before his death. What is the reader to believe?

    1) hat the "A" was there, or Pearl would not have kissed Dimmesdale
    2) hat since his only admission was in a whisper to Hester, his death in her arms was just a parable teaching that no man may call himself righteous
    3) hat the authorities who attempted to preserve Dimmesdale's character were justified because there was no "A" and Dimmesdale was in a delirium.
    4) hat the sins of hypcrisy and deceit burn from within and destroy because they hide greater sin

39. The narrator says that one of the many morals that can be drawn from Dimmesdale's experience is "Be true! Be true! Be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred." What is it that the narrator is implying Dimmesdale should have done?

    1) openly declared his love for Hester.
    2) recognized his sin and quit the ministry.
    3) told the truth to Chillingworth and asked him to give up his wife.
    4) admonished Hester publicly for her sins.

40. In what way was Dimmesdale true, in the sense that he thought he was doing the proper thing?

    1) He felt commissioned by God to carry on the work despite his shortcomings.
    2) He indirectly told Chillingworth the truth.
    3) He had confessed to Hester his love for her.
    4) He was true to his belief that suffering can save one's soul.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

TEST: Literature V
Short Story
Part I

NOTE: Students are permitted to use their text during this test.

Instructions to students:

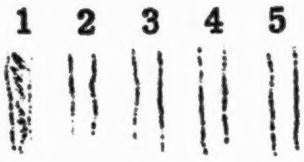
Answers to the questions are to be recorded on the separate answer sheets provided. PLEASE BE SURE TO USE ONLY SIDE A OF THE ANSWER SHEET, THE SIDE THAT HAS ROOM FOR 5 CHOICES.

Use a soft lead pencil (#2 or softer) and completely fill the space between the lines for the response you choose as the correct answer. Your score on this test will be the number of correct answers you mark. There is only one best answer for each item.

Sample test item: Who is the chief executive of the United States Government?
(1) The President
(2) The Secretary of State
(3) The Secretary of Defense
(4) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Since the correct answer is 1, the answer sheet is marked like this:

Sample test item:



The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

TE 000 205

1. In which of the following ways does "The Lottery" resemble the parable?
   (1) The characters are inhuman.
   (2) The theme is presented in an essay form.
   (3) The characters are not fully developed.
   (4) The dramatic impact of the story depends upon the plot.

2. The author has Old Man Warner say, "people ain't what they used to be," in order to make the point that
   (1) time is constantly moving and changing people's attitudes
   (2) people don't care about each other's problems as they used to
   (3) people care too much about the predicament of others
   (4) anything sanctioned by long use is right, holy, and just

3. "The Lottery" is a story about
   (1) a small community
   (2) men's double standards
   (3) hero worship
   (4) a religious epic

4. "The Lottery" is written in the form of a/an
   (1) allegory
   (2) "naked" parable
   (3) essay
   (4) realistic narrative

5. Which of the following elements is most important in "The Lottery"?
   (1) character
   (2) theme
   (3) plot
   (4) point of view (setting)

6. The lottery is mentioned casually in the same breath as teen-age dances and the Halloween program to show that
   (1) everything that happens is credible and commonplace
   (2) a basic chronological pattern of activities is present
   (3) a fantastic event is talked about as much as a common event
   (4) the community provides entertainment for its youth

7. All short stories have "moments of revelation", an element unique to the genre. In "The Lottery" this moment is when the reader becomes dramatically aware of
   (1) the fact that Mrs. Hutchinson will be stoned to death
   (2) man's slavish adherence to custom
   (3) the dual aspect of the human soul
   (4) the reason why the villagers are meeting on this day

8. Mrs. Hutchinson's statement about being late and her reason for being late: "wouldn't have me leave m'dishes in the sink now, would you, Joe?" are examples of
   (1) exaggeration
   (2) suspense
   (3) conflict
   (4) irony

9. "The Lottery" shows man's need for
    (1) a scapegoat
    (2) community activity
    (3) games of chance
    (4) continuation of tradition

10. Mrs. Hutchinson first declares the lottery is not "fair" because
    (1) her husband didn't have enough time to select his slip
    (2) her family will provide the winner
    (3) she realizes the lottery is wrong
    (4) she did not have a voice in making the rules of the lottery

"The Other Side of the Hedge"

11. From which of the following points of view has Forster chosen to write his story "The Other Side of the Hedge"?
    (1) first and third person
    (2) first person
    (3) third person limited
    (4) third person omniscient

12. In this story the pedometer is an instrument used to measure
    (1) years passed on the road of life
    (2) miles of competition with fellow travelers
    (3) miles walked along a road
    (4) years needed to see the inside of the hedge

13. What does the fall into the water symbolize?
    (1) a deluding dream
    (2) the stream of life
    (3) the shock of reality
    (4) purification

14. The probable symbolic meaning of the hedge in this story is a
    (1) difficult passage to the gates of ivory
    (2) fence which keeps the travelers on the road to heaven
    (3) barrier between two ways of life
    (4) difficult passage to the gates of horn

15. One element found in this short story to differentiate it from the form called allegory is a
    (1) complete underlying network of secondary meaning
    (2) limitation in such elements as time elapsed and characters
    (3) purposeful selection of many intensely significant details
    (4) development of the major character and the setting

16. The "little puff of air" is a device used by the author to show that
    (1) revival to continue on the road is possible
    (2) one should pause occasionally on this road
    (3) this road offers some boost to an ultimate goal
    (4) the other side is the better side

17. The narrator's statement that he has travelled "more wisely" than his brother and has had to leave him lying by the roadside is ironic because
    (1) in the end it is the brother who is ahead, who provides the strength and leadership
    (2) the last paragraph shows the brother lowering the narrator down to sleep, which the narrator expected
    (3) the narrator proves that anyone who has laid down and refused to plod further is acting more intelligently
    (4) the brother and the narrator both climbed through the hedge and changed their opinions almost simultaneously

18. The "moment of revelation" in this story is when the narrator
    (1) meets Miss Eliza Dimbleby on the other side of the hedge
    (2) sees the familiar monotonous, brown road through the ivory gate
    (3) seizes the can of beer from his brother, whom he does not recognize
    (4) lands in the water-filled moat on the other side of the hedge

"The Chrysanthemums"

19. Which of the following elements play the most important part in "The Chrysanthemums"?
    (1) setting
    (2) characters
    (3) theme
    (4) plot

20. What did Elisa mean when she said "That's a bright direction. There's a glowing there." as she watched the peddler drive away?
    (1) She had a secret longing for something more than the daily routine of farm life.
    (2) Across the Salinas River the sun always seemed to shine on the stubble fields.
    (3) The unknown territory beyond the Salinas River meant rich, good soil for planting of the crops.
    (4) She was referring to the direction of the departing tinker who she wanted to help to settle down.

21. The relationship between Elisa and her husband could best be described as one of
    (1) superficial respect and deep, passionate affection
    (2) sympathetic exchange of affection, respect and trust
    (3) mutual respect and unquestioning acceptance of each other
    (4) satisfied love and complete understanding of each other

22. The repairman in "The Chrysanthemums" earns himself a meal by playing upon Elisa Allen's
    (1) sympathy for anyone who is hungry
    (2) passionate affection for the flowers
    (3) longing to participate in the unsettled way of life
    (4) desire to have everything in her home neat and in good repair

23. Why did Elisa at the end of the story inquire about the fights?
    (1) She knew the fights interested her husband.
    (2) She wanted to know if men were hurt fighting.
    (3) She wanted to make sure that men were hurt as much as she had been hurt.
    (4) She was in a festive mood and wanted to talk about something other than the farm

24. "The grey flannel fog of winter which closed off the Salinas Valley from the sky," is symbolic of the
    (1) departure of the pot mender which blotted out Elisa's dreams
    (2) crushed flowers along the road which ended Elisa's romantic intentions
    (3) routine farm life which limited the horizon of Elisa's world
    (4) complete separation of nature and human passion according to Elisa

25. How does Steinbeck describe Elisa in the story?
    (1) an attractive woman who reveals a complex soul and sensitive pride
    (2) a lover of nature who gets intentionally involved emotionally with a repairman
    (3) a naive rancher's wife who is looking for affection and attention to escape reality
    (4) a plain-looking woman whose sentimentality allows her to cry easily over her flowers

26. How satisfied is Elisa with her way of life?
    (1) She does not like anything about it.
    (2) She feels a sense of accomplishment but feels a sense of frustration.
    (3) She is very happy in her role as a rancher's wife and considers herself to be fortunate to have such a good life.
    (4) She dislikes the ranch life and would prefer being a traveler like the peddler.

"The Catbird Seat"

27. Which of the following literary techniques does Thurber use in "The Catbird Seat"?
    (1) a chronological narrative pattern
    (2) a pattern which uses flashbacks
    (3) a structure with the climax at the start
    (4) a form which relies heavily on foreshadowing

28. Which of the following is the subject matter of "The Catbird Seat"?
    (1) murder
    (2) a cunning scheme
    (3) human relationships
    (4) an outrageous crime

29. What kind of short story is "The Catbird Seat"?
    (1) murder story
    (2) climactic story
    (3) suspense story
    (4) humor story

30. Why did Thurber say in the opening paragraph, Mr. Martin bought the pack of Camels, not just a pack of cigarettes?
    (1) This detail alerts the reader that the purchase is a planned one.
    (2) The reader is aware of the purpose, and the purchase is planned for this purpose.
    (3) Mr. Thurber did not have any definite reason for saying it one way or the other.
    (4) This detail reveals characterization: the fact that Mrs. Ulgine Barrows smoked cigarettes.

31. Which of the following characters is "sitting in the catbird seat" when the story begins?
    (1) Mr. Martin
    (2) Mr. Fitweiler
    (3) Mrs. Barrows
    (4) Miss Paird

32. Which of the following is the main reason Mr. Martin wanted to 'be rid' of Mrs. Barrows?
    (1) She was a brash, loud-voiced,crude woman.
    (2) She embarrassed him in front of people.
    (3) She was intent on running the firm of F. and S.
    (4) She proposed changes that would affect Mr. Martin's position.

33. "The Catbird Seat" is an enjoyable story to read because
    (1) the author uses baseball expressions
    (2) the underdog triumphs
    (3) Mr. Martin's triumph is private
    (4) Mr. Martin does not smoke

"The Jockey"

34. Which of the following is the best reason for Carson McCuller's not giving the "rich man" a name in "The Jockey"?
    (1) Bitsy was the chief character in the story.
    (2) His anonymity emphasizes his callousness.
    (3) Theme was the most important aspect of the story.
    (4) His namelessness places the emphasis on the other character

35. By the use of contrast and conflict, the author builds characterization in the story. Which of the following exemplifies contrast and conflict as found in the story?
    (1) the jockey's refusal to accept his loneliness
    (2) the dress of the jockey as opposed to the dress of the other patrons in the restaurant

(3) the compassion of the jockey against the insensitivity of the men
(4) the jockey's isolation created by his unreasonable contempt

36. In what way is the story "The Jockey" similar to the story "The Chrysanthemums"?
(1) They both involve outdoor people.
(2) They both use the theme of the poor rich people.
(3) They both reflect on the evil of gambling.
(4) They both involve the misuse of people for the gain of others.

37. What is the subject matter of "The Jockey"?
(1) insensitivity of a young jockey
(2) a study in human loneliness
(3) close companionship of two young men
(4) a young man loses a close friend

38. When the scene shifts from the dramatic presentation of Bitsy in the first three paragraphs to the three men seated at the dinner table, it is for the purpose of
(1) introducing the minor characters
(2) establishing the setting of the story
(3) developing the conflict of the story
(4) moving the story to a climax

39. Food plays a major part in this story, and to Bitsy, food is symbolic of
(1) the wealth of the world of racing that finds young Irish jockeys by the name of McGuire expendable
(2) the times that he and his young jockey friend spent eating together, and now those times are over forever
(3) the companionship which the three men enjoy, and Bitsy no longer has a close companionship with anyone
(4) something by which Bitsy can express his internal anger at the insensitivity of these three men

40. Sylvester's attitude toward the jockey can best be described as
(1) vicious
(2) professional
(3) apathetic
(4) sympathetic

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

Test: Short Story

Part II

Literature Curriculum V

NOTE:

Students are not permitted the use of the story during the test.

Instructions to students:

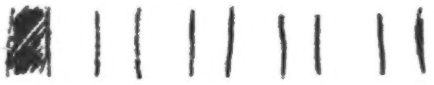
Answers to the questions are to be recorded on the separate answer sheets provided. PLEASE BE SURE TO USE ONLY SIDE A OF THE ANSWER SHEET, THE SIDE THAT HAS ROOM FOR 5 CHOICES.

Use a soft lead pencil (#2 or softer) and completely fill the space between the lines for the response you choose as the correct answer. Your score on this test will be the number of correct answers you mark. There is only one best answer for each item.

Sample test item: Who is the chief executive of the United States Government?
(1) The President
(2) The Secretary of State
(3) The Secretary of Defense
(4) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Since the correct answer is 1, the answer sheet is marked like this:

Sample test item: 1 2 3 4 5



The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

TE 000 205

Short Story--Part II

"Masque of the Red Death"

1. Which of the story elements is most important in "The Masque of the Red Death"?
   1. theme
   2. setting
   3. character
   4. plot

2. Which of the following best describes the significance of the elaborate colors of the chambers, aside from the black room?
   1. No definite meaning can be correlated with the colors of the other rooms.
   2. They represent the colors of the rainbow with a distinct reference to the colorfulness of life.
   3. The gaiety of the life which these people enjoyed in the prince's castle.
   4. The brilliance of the outside life that the people knew before the coming of the red death.

3. The clock serves as a unifying device and is also symbolic of the
   1. suspense which is created by its chiming.
   2. approach of the Out-Heroded Herod.
   3. red death which overcomes the revellers.
   4. passing of time and the imminence of death.

4. Poe's description of the rooms from east to west suggests
   1. the sun's movement in the sky each day.
   2. the progression from gaiety to the red death.
   3. man's movement through life from birth to death.
   4. passage of time until death of the revellers.

5. The absence of any but artificial light is suggestive of the fact that the
   1. light provided by the sun in the outside world is not important; the revellers' only concern is to forget the red death.
   2. dancers are shutting themselves away from the light of reality, the light of the sun which marks the passage of time.
   3. people in the castle are conscious of the passage of time under any circumstances.
   4. lighted braziers themselves represent the light of reality and the passage of time for the gay revellers.

6. When the revellers realize that the garments of the intruder are "untenanted by any tangible form," they come to the final, black apartment; the clock stops and the flames go out. Poe is saying that
   1. we should remember death and not be overwhelmed by its impact as the revellers were.
   2. the isolation of a segment of society will finally result in the total isolation of the life of a human being.

3. death will overtake anyone who loses himself in pastimes in order to forget or to shut out death.
4. no man really acknowledges death until he comes to the end of his own life.

7. Which one of the following psychology mechanisms that humans display in their behavior is exemplified by Poe?
   1. defensiveness
   2. illusion of grandeur
   3. escape
   4. substitution

8. What does the attitude of the people toward the masqueraders in the "Masque of the Red Death" symbolize?
   1. People know death is inevitable but still are not prepared to face it.
   2. Some costumes are not appropriate at any masquerade party.
   3. Death is a religious event and should not be made a jest of even at a masquerade party.
   4. People are prejudiced against exterior appearance of a person rather than the person himself.

"Minister's Black Veil"

9. Hawthorne describes the "Minister's Black Veil" as a parable that is
   1. an obscure romantic puritanism.
   2. an allegory using medieval elements to produce an effect of mystery.
   3. a lesson or moral in the form of allegory.
   4. a lesson that the minister wishes to teach.

10. The characters in the story react more strongly to the Black Veil itself than to the idea it represents. By showing this, Hawthorne is perhaps saying that
    1. people care only about things they can see.
    2. people avoid facing the real issue of their lives.
    3. black is a universal symbol of evil.
    4. every man wears a black veil.

11. The Black Veil means many things to different characters, but the meaning that Hawthorne finally wants us to see is that
    1. people care only about the things they can see.
    2. even ministers have dark secrets.
    3. man should hide his secrets.
    4. every man wears a black veil.

12. Even though the story covers the span of the minister's life, Hawthorne is able to maintain the unity of time by
    1. leaving out all unimportant details.
    2. presenting time only in relation to the veil.
    3. using the Gothic device of suspending the element of time.
    4. noting the increase in "Father Hooper's" gray hair.

13. Which of the following is an example from the story of a Gothic device?
    1. "Our parson has gone mad"
    2. "...he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet, and rushed forth into the darkness"
    3. "Do not desert me, though this veil must be between us here on earth"
    4. "...good Mr. Hooper's face is dust; but awful is still the thought that it mouldered beneath the Black Veil!"

14. What was the one desirable effect of the Black Veil?
    1. Father Hooper never married.
    2. It made Father Hooper an efficient clergyman.
    3. It made Father Hooper feared by the people.
    4. People felt Father Hooper had sinned.

15. Under which of the following circumstances would the minister perhaps have removed the Black Veil?
    1. if all the people were completely honest with themselves and others.
    2. if all the people would have prayed daily.
    3. if all the people had tithed and attended church regularly.
    4. if all the "gossipy women" had stopped gossiping.

"Garden Party"

16. Laura's actions indicate that with regard to the structure of society, she
    1. is not aware of class distinction.
    2. is aware of class distinction.
    3. does not feel class distinctions.
    4. does not acknowledge her position on the social ladder.

17. When Laura tells her mother about the working man's death, Mrs. Sheridan's attitude is
    1. sentimental.
    2. cruel.
    3. indifferent.
    4. consciously selfish.

18. When Laura describes her visit to the dead man's house as "simply marvelous", she, in effect,
    1. strikes back against her mother for her trivial questions.
    2. refers to her inner growth gained with a new experience.

3. refers to her total acceptance into the dead man's house.
4. triumphs with her sympathetic character over her mother.

19. The house is situated at the top of a steep rise overlooking the workers' cottages in order to create a/an
    1. rich upper-class setting.
    2. high, carefree attitude.
    3. garden party atmosphere.
    4. slanted point of view.

20. In this story, food is symbolic of
    1. the children's treat.
    2. a family's sorrow.
    3. wealth and luxury.
    4. the workingman's death.

21. This story is essentially a story about
    1. the joyous, light-hearted, sun-drenched world of garden parties as opposed to the working society.
    2. the maturity of a young girl when she sees death closely for the first time.
    3. a morning in the life of these gay and dreadfully unsympathetic people who take luxury for granted.
    4. the insensitivity of the upper class about the death of a man belonging to the lower class.

22. In this story, the author made the carter's sister appear rather unpleasant to show that
    1. she did want to accept charity even if her family was part of the poor lower class.
    2. a member of the working class was far more affected by death than people of the upper class.
    3. a lower class person could be as vicious and insensitive as a member of the upper class.
    4. while not all of the inhabitants of the cottage are unworthy to associate with, neither are they all desirable.

"For Esme--With Love and Squalor"

23. The second half of the story is told in 3rd person limited instead of first person point of view as the first half is because
    1. the main character is a different person in the second half than he was in the first half.
    2. it would have been difficult for the "I" to say of himself, "I felt my mind dislodge itself and teeter...."
    3. the story of a broken man who begins recovery after a nervous breakdown could not be told in a first person point of view.
    4. Salinger uses specific details to suggest a whole character and Sergeant X is not a whole man.

24. The form of the story is that of a
    1. story within a story.
    2. double parable.
    3. an allegory.
    4. a short novel.

25. Why was Esme's letter to Sergeant X significant?
    1. It reinforced the thematic relationships.
    2. It was a parallel to her brother's letter in the second half of the story.
    3. It provided the necessary touch of humanity for his rehabilitation..
    4. It afforded a solution to Corporal Z's wartime habit of innocent destruction.

26. The title of the story indicates the twin themes of lover and suffering, and the tribute to Esme reinforces the narrator's affirmation that
    1. suffering always overpowers love.
    2. people suffer universally through love.
    3. "squalorly" love can never endure.
    4. in spite of "squalor, " love can exist.

27. The mention of the cat episode shows Corporal Z as a man who
    1. has still retained his sensitivity.
    2. has formed the wartime habit of killing.
    3. is concerned with the horrors of war.
    4. cannot destroy without cause or conscience.

28. Sergeant X's answer to the question, "What is hell?" can be described as the
    1. sensitivity to suffering and brutality.
    2. nervous breakdown which he is experiencing.
    3. suffering of being unable to love.
    4. wartime meeting between a soldier and a girl.

29. The watch plays an important part in the story as a literary device known as a/an
    1. extended metaphor.
    2. abstract symbol.
    3. ironic symbol.
    4. foreshadowing device.

30. Why was a child selected to play such an important role in the story?
    1. Christ was a child.
    2. Children haven't learned how to harm others.
    3. Children are usually inherently more honest and more able to show love.
    4. A child permitted the author to oversimplify the problem of Sergeant X.

"How Beautiful With Shoes"

31. Steele has chosen not to tell the story by Amarantha as first person narrator because
    1. her limited intelligence and awareness would place limitations on how and what might be said.
    2. the entire story would focus upon Mare, and Humble Jewett's feelings could not be expressed.
    3. the story needed to be told by Jewett who was the "vehicle" which brought about the change in Mare.
    4. the reader would be limited to the perceptions and experiences of only the girl in the story.

32. At the conclusion of the story Mare tells Ruby to "go away! Go 'way! Lea' me be!" because she
    1. has fallen in love with the madman, Humble Jewett.
    2. does not want to return to her former world.
    3. is no longer in love with her former boyfriend.
    4. is tired of talking about her ugly experience with Jewett.

33. Mare's shoes in the story are symbolic of the
    1. same tightness that Humble Jewett felt in his surroundings.
    2. newness of poetry and a madman in Mare's limited world.
    3. new and painful love that Amarantha was developing for Ruby Herter.
    4. painful knowledge which brings about a change in the girl.

34. The story takes place in the spring time, the time of birth and awakening in the countryside which parallels the
    1. initial awakening in the girl.
    2. sudden birth of Jewett's intelligence.
    3. awakening of Mare and Ruby's love.
    4. awakening of Mare's affection for Jewett.

35. In this story Steele presents Jewett as a/an
    1. unsophisticated escapee from the Dayville Asylum.
    2. character with background, motivation.
    3. man who has been unbalanced since college.
    4. dreamer who is in love with poetry and Mare's shoes.

36. Steele has the events take place through a night and into the dawn of the next day because he wants to
    1. associate the blackness of the night with the black ugliness of the entire situation.
    2. have the night represent the ugly, black killing of Jewett by the drunkard, old man Wyker.
    3. symbolically represent the birth of a new, deeper love of Ruby Herter by Amarantha.
    4. symbolically parallel the initiation of Mare's naive sensibility into a new consciousness.

37. What is the central theme of this story?
    1. The world outside one's circle of friends and acquaintances is non-existent and thus incomprehensible.
    2. Everyone has a secret longing for something more than the daily rounds of our own daily lives.
    3. Knowledge does not bring happiness, but it is infinitely more desirable than complacent unawareness.
    4. Some people do not possess the ability to understand another's loneliness or another's pain.

"The Chaser"

38. The old man's statement, "If I did not sell love potions...I should not have mentioned the other matter to you.", means that he
    1. wants to make his customer aware of all the different types of potions that he has for sale.
    2. does not want to deceive Alan about his private knowledge and tries to force Alan to be realistic.
    3. wishes to suggest all the possible means that will bring the happiness which Alan desperately desires.
    4. knows that when Alan gets what he wants, it will not make him happy, and he will return.

39. When talking about a change in the two characters in this short story, one would have to say that
    1. both characters change.
    2. only Alan changes.
    3. neither character changes.
    4. only the old man changes.

40. This story closely resembles a short play because Collier
    1. sets the scene and then brings in the characters who speak their parts.
    2. uses conversation between characters from the very beginning of the story.
    3. begins the story with description just as a play begins with setting.
    4. uses conversation to present the setting just as a play usually does.

41. This story could best be described as a/an
    1. character study in depth.
    2. short, symbolic allegory.
    3. short, ironic parable.
    4. humorous, ironic dialogue.

42. The sentence, "The effects of the potion are permanent, and extend far beyond casual impulse," is an example of a/an
    1. exaggeration.
    2. understatement.
    3. extended metaphor.
    4. hyperbole.

43. When Collier chose to handle his subject matter with humor and light irony, certain limitations were imposed upon him such as the
    1. lack of depth of character development.
    2. elimination of descriptive paragraphs.
    3. necessity to suggest rather than to show.
    4. lack of a descriptive setting for the story.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

PROSE FICTION:
Short Story
Novel

Literature Curriculum V
Student Version

The Project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

STUDENT VERSION

"The Lottery"
by Shirley Jackson

1. "The Lottery" is somewhat similar in form to the fable. You will probably recall Aesop's fables. Can you think of any way in which these fables and "The Lottery" are alike? How they are different?

2. The Pearl by John Steinbeck bears a resemblance to the parable. "The Lottery", too, is not unlike a parable. Point out any resemblances you see.

3. Why is characterization reduced to a minimum in a parable? Would you say "The Lottery" is a "naked parable" (as are those we find in the New Testament)? Explain.

4. Why do you think Miss Jackson included so many concrete details in her opening paragraphs?

5. Which--character, plot, or theme--seems most important in "The Lottery?" Can you think of any reason this one element is stressed?

6. There is no conflict between tangible forces in "The Lottery." Is there any other kind of conflict? Discuss.

7. "The Lottery" obviously contains some symbolic elements. What do you think the lottery itself might represent?

8. Basically "The Lottery" concerns the drawing of lots by a group of citizens to determine who shall be stoned to death. Is there another subject? If so, what?

9. The form of "The Lottery" seems somewhat different from that of most short stories. How does it differ? Do you consider it a "short story"--a piece of fiction? If so, explain why. If not, give the evidence you base your answer upon.

10. It sometimes is helpful when the meaning of a story seems elusive to ask yourself: whose story is this? Apply this question to "The Lottery." Is it Mrs. Hutchinson's story? Or is it the story of a community? Or a story about men in general? Explain.

11. The lottery was an old, respected custom in the village. Does this suggest anything important in relation to the theme?

12. Can you find examples of irony in the story?

13. What do you think is the significance of this story? Does it seem to make more than one point? Explain.

14. In what way are subject and point of view inseparable in this story? How is form influenced by subject? by point of view?

15. The tone of a story is usually very important. The most bizarre story, if told in a light, or gay, manner will have an entirely different effect on us than the same story told in a serious, straightforward manner. What is the tone of the lottery? On what do you base your reply?

16. Miss Jackson has worked very hard in this story from the beginning to mold your attitude. Look back over the story. At what point did you realize what was actually happening? Describe your reaction at the conclusion.

17. Old Man Warner is in favor of lotteries. Reread his statements. What do you think his attitude represents?

18. What attitude did Mrs. Hutchinson seem to have when she arrived at the lottery? At what point did this attitude change? What do you think the author was implying at this point?

19. Can you explain the author's purpose in including the following incidents?

    a. Mrs. Hutchinson, arriving late at the lottery, is apologetic but jolly. "Clean forgot what day it was...." and she laughs softly with her friend as she waits.

    b. The children gather early, and play while waiting. An entire paragraph is concerned with their antics.

    c. The men, assembling for the lottery, discuss planting, rain, tractors and taxes while the women exchange gossip and pleasantries. Another entire paragraph is devoted to this.

    d. The routine of the black box and the drawing of the lottery is discussed, with special emphasis on the accompanying rituals.

    e. Steve Adams and Mrs. Graves lead the pack as they attack Jessie Hutchinson.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMPOSITION

1. "People ain't the way they used to be," Old Man Warner remarked. What is the significance of this remark? Write a paragraph explaining the relation of this idea to the theme of the story.

2. It is only after Tessie Hutchinson realized she was the victim that she cried out that the drawing was unfair. Why is this significant? What comment do you think the author is making about human nature? Is there another incident in the story that says, in substance, the same thing? Write a short paragraph explaining the author's motive in including these incidents.

3. The Lottery is mentioned casually (page 131) in the same breath as teen age dances and the Halloween program. Why?

4. There are several related ideas expressed in "The Lottery." The author has been careful not to limit our interpretation too sharply. Discuss what comment you feel the author is making. Use details from the story to justify your position.

5. Write a few paragraphs discussing one or more of the symbols used in "The Lottery." Show how the author made effective use of it in her story.

"The Other Side of the Hedge"

by E. M. Forster

At first this story will seem very different from "The Lottery." It will probably seem less realistic to you. You might ask yourself whether this is because Forster was less able to write realistically or because he had a different purpose from Shirley Jackson. Also compare the amount of realism here with what you have found in the fables you read in the seventh grade.

But you may find that the story has similarities to "The Lottery" despite some differences in surface details. Think carefully about the themes of each, which certainly are not exactly the same but which may in the opinion of some of the class members have a few things in common. And both are included in our collection of short stories, so they must be alike in some characteristics which cause them to belong to the genre called "short story." Try to detect these characteristics as you read.

This is the kind of story which needs to be read, like ~~a~~ poem, with attention to every word, since most of the important words--the nouns, many of the verbs, adjectives, and adverbs--have more than one meaning. Every important word was selected for a purpose. It is your job to find that purpose. And even more than many other works of literature, it needs to be reread, since many of the words mean much more to someone who knows the whole story. Indeed you may find that you need to go back over it three or four times before you can answer all of the study questions.

Study Questions

After you have read "The Other Side of the Hedge," go back over it to find the answers to the study questions so that you will be prepared to discuss it in class with your teacher.

1. Compare and contrast the treatment of such elements as theme, character, conflict, and the ending of this story with "The Lottery." Are similar elements found in other short stories you have read? Do these similarities show anything about what a short story is? Do the differences show anything about what allegory is?

2. What is an allegory? Does this story fit into that category? Why do you think Forster chose this form for his story?

3. Compare and contrast the way the road is used here with the way it is used in some of the travel and journey literature you read in the eighth and ninth grade. Does the road here have the same sort of goal as most roads which have symbolic meaning? Why does it wind around? Would you rather follow this road or the "strait and narrow" road mentioned in the Bible?

4. How much do you know about the background of the protagonist? What does he do for a living? Why was he travelling alone? Where was he going? What is his name? Why are you not told these things?

5. Compare the setting of the story with the setting of "The Lottery." Why did Forster not try to make his setting more realistic?

6. What is the subject of "The Other Side of the Hedge"? Is it treated on more than one level? Explain your answer. What elements of conflict are present in the story? What differences do you see between life on the two sides of the hedge? Briefly state what you believe to be the theme of the story and show what makes you think so.

7. Why does the author not tell us what happened next morning when the narrator awoke? Why does he end his story so abruptly at this particular point? How does this point compare with the opening?

8. Who is telling the story? Why do you suppose Forster chose to tell it in the first person? How would it have changed the story to shift it to the third person point of view? Is the narrator a fictional character, or is the author himself the speaker? Give reasons for your answers.

9. Dramatic irony comes about when you, the reader, know that something a character says really means more than he thinks it does. Find examples of irony here. How has the author used irony to reveal his own attitude about the significance of life? Comment especially about the references to the narrator's brother.

STUDENT VERSION

"THE CHRYSANTHEMUMS"

by John Steinbeck

As you read this story, focus your attention upon the characters that the author has created. Has he portrayed people who by their words and actions contribute to the central idea of the story? Are they believable? Do they respond to situations in a manner consistent with the kinds of people they seem to be? Does the protagonist undergo a basic change, or is there simply a gradual revelation of her nature to the reader? Does she gain self-knowledge as a result of conflict with herself, with other characters, or with circumstances? Has the author, through his handling of the story commented upon some aspect of human nature? Keep these questions in mind as you read "The Chrysanthemums."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why does the pot mender show an interest in the chrysanthemums? What is the immediate effect on Eliza?

2. Why did Eliza "make" work for the man? Was she any more genuine than he?

3. What changes did the chance encounter bring about in Eliza? Why do you think the man remains nameless?

4. Comment upon the relationship between Eliza and her husband. What kind of man is he? Why could she not tell him of the hurt she received when she saw her chrysanthemums lying in the road?

5. What is the main conflict in the story? Are there any other conflicts? How do they bring out the central idea?

6. What point is Steinbeck making through this story? Do you agree with his point of view? Give your reasons.

7. Do you accept Eliza as a real person? Is her behavior consistent? Why did her husband's admiration for her "planter's hands" not bring out the same reaction in her as the pot mender's insincere interest?

8. Do you think Steinbeck intended the chrysanthemums to be a symbol? Explain your ideas.

9. How has Steinbeck made nature in harmony with the central mood of the story and with Eliza Allen's character? Could the "grey-flannel fog" and the yellow willow that seemed like a "thin band of sunshine" be interpreted merely as images, or are they symbols?

10. Compare the characters in this story with those in "The Other Side of the Hedge" and "The Lottery." Which seem more real? Why do you think this is so?

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMPOSITION

1. "That's a bright direction. There's a glowing there," whispered Eliza after she had silently told the pot mender good-by. Describe the conflict that was going on inside her at that moment. Did she really believe the dream that the man had awakened in her, or was she firmly rooted in reality? Try to explain the reason for her emotions, using details from the story to justify the position you take.

2. Have you ever done a favor for someone only to discover later that it was not appreciated? How did you feel about it when you found out? For example, you may have given a discarded toy that had once meant a lot to you when you were young, to a neighbor, only to find next day that it was lying in the street in front of the house, broken. Write about the incident, then try to describe your feelings.

3. Write a paragraph or two explaining the significance of the title, and how it helps to reveal the meaning of the story.

"The Catbird Seat"
by James Thurber

Thurber intended you to be amused by this story, and you very likely responded to his humor with a few chuckles. One of the marks of a successful writer is that he achieves what he set out to do. The questions that follow are intended to help you understand how the author has achieved his purpose. Read the story once just for pleasure, then read it again as you search for the answers to the questions. This will prepare you to discuss the story in class.

Study Questions

1. One of the aspects of the short story we have discussed in this unit is its compression. Reread the first paragraph on page 326.

How has Thurber given the impression of urgent haste through this account of Mr. Martin's entry into Mrs. Barrow's apartment? He has given the impression that it was all one easy, smooth, quick movement. What details has he omitted in order to achieve this impression? What do we know Mr. Martin must actually have gone through before he gained admission?

2. What purpose is served by the following details in the story?

a) Mr. Martin's recollection of Miss Paird's remark: "Why, I even believe you like the woman." (page 323, 8 lines up from the bottom of the page)

b)"He had never drunk anything stronger in his life--unless you could count ginger ale." (page 325, first paragraph)

c) The fact that Mrs. Barrows' apartment is in a building where there will be "no doorman or other attendants." (page 325, last paragraph)

Find other details that you think are significant, and explain why Thurber included them.

3. How would the story have been changed if the author had written it in a chronological narrative pattern? What is the function of the flashbacks? Why do you suppose Thurber chose to begin his story where he did?

4. Of the three main characters in the story, which one do you feel most identity with? How has Thurber written his story to be sure you will feel this way?

5. What kind of people are the protagonist and the antagonist? Do you take them seriously? Why or why not?

6. Have you ever felt pushed around by someone in authority whom you disliked? A teacher, camp counselor, relative, for example? How do you think this experience might have helped you to accept this improbable story?

7. Murder is a terrible crime, and Mr. Martin is planning a murder. Why, then, are we not horrified as we read the story?

8. Basically, humor consists of contrast between what is normal and commonplace with something incongruous or extravagant. For example, why do we laugh when a pompous, disagreeable, well-dressed petty official slips and falls on an orange peel at a public ceremony? Thurber has made use of such contrast all through the story - the glass of milk in the hand that plots murder; the decision to "rub out" the woman, mentioned alongside the purchase of a pack of cigarettes; the sober little accountant and the galumphing "circus horse." Go through the story and find other examples of this device that helps to create humor.

9. Why was Mr. Martin's triumph a private one? Why could he not tell anyone about it?

10. Explain the irony of Ulgine Barrow's defeat. How does Mr. Fitweiler relate to the situation?

11. It has been said that truth is more often arrived at imaginatively than by reason. What universal truth do you think Thurber is trying to convey through his story? Would you say this is the subject of the story? Give reasons for your answer.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMPOSITION

1. Discuss the theme of "The Catbird Seat."

2. Write a character sketch of Ulgine Barrows:

   a) as she appeared to Mr. Martin
   b) as she appear to Mr. Fitweiler
   c) as she sees herself.

   Which is the real Mrs. Barrows? Any of these? A composite of all three? Or something else? Give reasons for your answer.

3. What was Mr. Martin really like? Was he what he appeared to be? In the light of your answer, what do you mean by "really"?

4. Compare "The Catbird Seat" with the other stories you have read in this unit. What common elements does it share with the other stories? How is it different? Make specific references to subject, form, point of view, plot, setting, tone, style, and character.

"The Jockey"

by Carson McCullers

Study Questions

1. How do the first three paragraphs point ahead to what is to come? What details suggest the jockey's state of mind? Are there any suggestions as to what kind of man he was?

2. What kind of people are "the rich man," Sylvester, and Simmons? Characterize them. In this story they obviously play subordinate roles, but are they sufficiently credible? Why do you think the author referred to the man for whom Bitsy had ridden only as "the rich man?" Does this tell you something about the use she is making of this character? Does it give you a clue to the meaning of the story?

3. Plot and character often interpenetrate. How are they related in this story? How do the actions of the people further the plot and reveal the theme?

4. "Everyone was with somebody else; there was no other person drinking alone that night." Explain the significance of this statement. Is such a revelation by the author in keeping with the objective way she usually reveals what her people are thinking?

5. If a story involved nothing more than plausibility, it would not be a piece of fiction. What is this story about? Does it have a larger significance than the presentation of these four people?

6. Does the plot supply a rising tide of interest, a climax, and suspense in the outcome? What suspense is present in the story? Is it adequate?

7. Can you justify the author's summary account (Sylvester's words) of what ails the jockey? Why didn't the author work out the details concretely and dramatically, say in a "flashback?"

8. Note that the author never tells us what her characters are thinking or what their actions mean; instead she merely tells us what they do and say. Is this in any way different from the treatment of the characters in "The Catbird Seat"? "The Lottery?" If so, how?

9. Would you characterize this story as sentimental? Why or why not?

10. Is the final part of the incident--when the jockey spits out the potatoes--plausible? Why do you think the jockey felt impelled to do this? Is the action symbolic? If so, of what?

11. Had the author in any way called your attention specifically to the food before? In what way did she prepare you for Bitsy's final action?

12. What is the jockey's point of view in this story? Is it different from the author's? How does the author reveal Bitsy's attitude toward the men at the table?

13. What is the attitude of Sylvester toward the jockey? How does the rich man feel? How do you know? Why does Simmons say he's crazy?

14. What is your reaction to the jockey? Do you share Simmons' viewpoint? At what point in the story do you feel sympathy for the jockey?

15. Note the reaction of the jockey when Sylvester first told him to "behave reasonable." Is this revealing? In what way?

16. Does the detail concerning the shattered rose seem in any way significant? In what way?

17. Examine the attitude of each of the three men toward McGuire. Do their attitudes differ? In what way?

18. Would you characterize the rich man, Sylvester, and Simmons as insensitive? Why or why not?

19. Just what is the connotation of the term libertine?

20. What is significant about the jockey paying his bill at the bar "with a brand new 50 dollar bill" and not counting the change?

21. What is the attitude of the author toward the characters? How do you know?

22. What is the tone of the story?

23. In a story of this sort it is hard to create an effective ending. Is this ending effective? If you think so, try to indicate why. If not, point out what you think weakens it.

24. Of what significance is the title of this story? How does it relate to theme?

25. The subject, point of view, and form of any story are closely related, but in this story the subject and point of view are especially interrelated. In what way?

26. "What happens" in a story, or the "plot" of a story, may be only the growth of an awareness--a realization. It does not have to be an event in the physical world. It may be an awareness that comes merely to the reader, who sees over and beyond the characters in the story. Do you think this statement may be in any way applicable to this story? If so, how?

Suggestions for Composition

1. Note how often food is stressed in the story. Obviously the author is using it to tell us something important. Scan the story again briefly, noting the various references to food. Then write a paragraph explaining the author's purpose in emphasizing it.

2. The jockey tells us much more about himself indirectly than directly. What do you learn about him beyond that which either he or his listeners directly reveal? Write a paragraph in which you discuss how the author allowed him, through gesture, movement, and action, to tell his story.

Student Version

"The Masque of the Red Death"
By Edgar Allen Poe

Study Questions

1. Where is the specific geographical setting for this tale? When does it occur? Why are we not told these things?

2. Some stories are slanted toward theme, others toward plot, still others toward setting. Which of these elements seems of more importance in "The Masque of the Red Death"? Can you think of any reasons why this particular element is stressed?

3. In form this story is similar to others you have studied previously. In what way? Is it also different in certain aspects from these stories? How?

4. Why do you think Poe devoted so much of his story--approximately three-fourths--to visual details? What did this accomplish?

5. Allegories tend to have a moral. Is there a moral statement in the story? If so, what?

6. What aspects of this story tend to be "Gothic"? (Look this word up in your dictionary.) Explain.

7. It becomes obvious as we read that certain elements in this story are symbolic. The clock is alluded to quite often. What effect does this constant illusion have on the reader? How else does the clock serve a purpose?

8. The seven chambers are elaborately described. Of what do they seem symbolic?

9. Read again the description of the seventh chamber. What do you think is the significance of its lying "the most westwardly of the seven?" Note the sable draperies, the sable carpet, and the clock of ebony. How is color used here? Note, too, that the sound of the clock here is more emphatic. Of what significance is this?

10. Explain the phrase "Out-Heroded Herod." What effect does this phrase achieve?

11. The masked stranger struck terror into the hearts of the dancers. Why does this disguise so alarm the revellers?

Suggestions for Composition

1. Approximately three-fourths of this story concerns visual detail. Scan the story briefly, selecting some of the details. Note how Poe uses

these details to create a stylized and ornate setting. How do they add to the effectiveness of the story? Try describing an incident, an event, or an occasion of some sort in which you can effectively employ the use of visual detail. Before you begin, make a list of all the visual details possible. Now select those which will help you achieve your purpose. For example, if you are describing a football game, and you wish your reader to see it as a gay, colorful event, the very breath and soul of autumn and youth, you will wish to select those visual details which will create such an image. If, on the other hand, you wish your reader to see the game as a brutal, uncivilized, and ridiculous "game," you will wish to select other visual details.

Obviously, what we present for our reader to "see" can alter or even create mood, setting, or subject matter itself.

After selecting your subject, determining your purpose and identifying your audience, write several paragraphs, being careful to use as many "visual details" as possible.

2. While Poe's story is not necessarily concerned with morality as such, its basic theme is concerned with problems vital to men in the twentieth century as well as to those of the Middle Ages. While "The Lottery" and "The Masque of the Red Death" share certain similarities of form, they are basically quite different. Still, there is an important similarity in their themes. Think over the two stories and see if you can discover it.

3. Select some of the symbols in the story and discuss their meaning and importance to the story.

"The Minister's Black Veil--A Parable"

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

Study Questions

1. A writer adapts the form of this story to suit his purposes. Why do you think Hawthorne chose to put this tale into the form of a parable? Do you think such a form served better than a conventional, strongly plotted, realistic treatment might have? Why?

2. One definition of a short story as a genre is that it is not only short, but that it must capture with one incident what a novel might in fifty. This short story might seem at first an exception to this . Can you see why, despite the fact that the time span covers a lifetime, the story really doesn't violate this principle?

3. Why does Mr. Hooper don his veil? Why does he refuse to discuss his motives? Why do you think we are not told these things?

4. Hawthorne uses example after example to build a picture of the reaction of the people to the veil. Why do you think he devoted so much of the story to their varied reactions?

5. Reread the incident in which one parishioner imagines that even the corpse at a funeral shudders at the sight of the veil. What purpose does this serve?

6. What purpose does the black veil itself serve? Of what is it symbolic? Why did Hawthorne not reveal its meaning until the end of the story?

7. Why do you think Hawthorne included the incident concerning the minister and his fiancee? Why do you think the fiancee was included in the final secen? What purpose does this serve?

8. How does Hawthorne convey to the reader the passing of time in the story? Is there more than one way? Which seems most effective?

9. Unity is essential to the short story. What unifying elements are present in this story? In what way?

10. We think of Gothic elements in a story as being those that deal with mystery, magic, or horror. Does Hawthorne use any such elements in this story? If so, what? Why do you think the author included such incidents?

11. There is a brooding atmosphere of unknown terror hovering over this tale. How does the author create this atmosphere? What does it add to the meaning, to the subject with which the writer is dealing?

12. An author can subtly control the meaning or import of his story through careful attention to tone. How would you characterize the tone of "The Minister's Black Veil"? Does the tone differ from that of Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death"? In what way?

13. This story is, after all (as indeed Hawthorne tells us in the title), a parable. We think of parables as stories that have a moral or teach a lesson. Character, setting, and plot are seldom stressed. In what way is this story a parable? Does Hawthorne make a general statement about human nature? If so, what?

14. What irony do you see in the fact that people react more strongly to the veil than to the idea it represents? Are there other instances of irony? Explain.

Suggestions for Composition

1. Write a few paragraphs explaining the symbols Hawthorne uses in "The Minister's Black Veil."

2. On page 407, reread the interchange between the physician and his wife. What do you think the doctor has reference to? Write a paragraph explaining what the doctor is talking about.

3. Men, women and children grew to fear the kind, gentle minister who wore the black veil. What is Hawthorne saying about human nature? Can you think of any illustrations of your own? Write a paragraph or two in which you show how men often fail to look beyond the externals, and judge a man not for what he is but for what he appears to be to them.

"The Garden Party"
By Katherine Mansfield

Study Questions

1. What words and phrases in the first paragraph set the tone and mood of the story?

2. What effect does the author achieve with her first sentence? Does it seem as if an interrupted activity were being resumed? What do you think her purpose was in writing such an opening sentence?

3. A good portion of the first part of the story describes Laura's home, the garden, and her activities on the morning of the garden party. Why do you think the author included all of this? Does it have any relation to the theme? If so, what?

4. When Laura talks to the workingmen she discovers they are, after all, "nice." Note the passage: "Laura's upbringing made her wonder for a moment whether it was quite respectful of a workman to talk to her of bang slap in the eye." Is this knowledge about Laura's family important to the reader? Why do you think the author inserted it so early in the story?

5. "'Tuk-tuk-tuk,' clucked cook like an agitated hen." Find other examples of figurative language. What do they add to the story?

6. What was Laura's reaction to the news about the carter's death? Jose's? mother's? These attitudes tell us, of course, something important about the people involved, but what relation do they have to the subject itself?

7. Why does Laura decide to visit the cottages below the house? Note her first reaction to taking "the food" for the children. What does this incident tell us about her mother? About Laura?

8. Why do you think the author made the carter's sister appear rather unpleasant? How does the author avoid sentimentality in this scene?

9. Reread the passage on page 13 in which Laura views the carter's body. What did she discover about death? Note the sentence "But all the same you had to cry . . . ." What does this tell us about her new knowledge?

10. What indication have you had earlier that Laura especially loved her brother? What was she trying to say to him as she left the cottages? Do you think he understood? Why do you think Katherine Mansfield left Laura's sentence unfinished?

11. Sometimes stories begin and end in such a way we feel that life is going on beyond the printed page after the last word has been written. Some authors feel a story should have this effect--it seems to do less violence to life itself. Do you detect this in "The Garden Party?" Explain.

Suggestions for Composition

1. Laura did not finish her sentence "Isn't life---?" What do you think she was trying to say? What had this experience taught her? Write a paragraph in which you describe Laura's reactions to all the events of the day.

2. A story should have a larger human significance above and beyond the immediate actions of the characters. Is Katherine Mansfield making a statement about human nature in general? Write a paragraph explaining what you think "The Garden Party" is all about. Use incidents from the story to prove your position.

"For Esmé--With Love and Squalor"
By J. D. Salinger

Here is a story that is sure to make an impression upon you. Read it through once without interruption, and allow yourself to be carried along with the story. How did you feel at the end? What questions did you find yourself wondering about?

Now go back and read it again, this time consciously asking yourself, how did Salinger make you feel this way? How did he suggest certain ideas to your mind? How did he make his characters seem real?

The following questions will help to guide you into an understanding of the story, and form a basis for discussion with your teacher.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. How does Salinger lead you to expect that the watch will play an important part in the story? What do we call this literary device? Find the places in the story where the watch is mentioned. What associations are established with the watch? Why is this significant?

2. Are there any other examples of foreshadowing in the first part of the story? What events do they prepare the reader for?

3. Salinger often uses a few deftly chosen details to suggest a whole character. What impression do you get of the choir coach (p. 190) and the waitress (p. 191)? What are the words that suggest these impression?

4. How has Salinger emphasized the loneliness of the soldier? List the details found in the first part of the story that reinforce this idea. Why is it important to establish the character of the soldier as that of a sensitive soul?

5. Who is the narrator? Who is Sergeant X? Why does the author shift to a third person narration when telling about his nervous breakdown under the strain of sustained combat? What difficulties would he have encountered if he had continued to write in the first person?

6. What kind of person is Corporal Y? How has the author used him to throw light on the character of Sergeant X?

7. Why does mention of the cat make Sergeant X vomit? How is this episode related to the inscription in the book, "Dear God, Life is Hell!"? How does Sergeant X diagnose the problem?

8. What kind of person is Esmé? How does she regard herself? How does she affect the soldier in the tea shop during their brief encounter?

9. Which other characters, briefly mentioned in the story, display a callous attitude towards war? How do they contrast with Esmé and Charles?

10. What is the theme of the story? How is it underscored by the title? In the conflict between love and squalor, how would you align the different characters, and on which side would you place the different actions?

11. How many parts are there to the story? What is the time sequence? Why do you suppose Salinger chose to tell his story this way instead of in a straight chronological narrative?

12. Why do you suppose the author told in such detail all that happened between Esmé, Charles, and the narrator in the tea shop? How would it have altered the story if he had just reported, "Esmé was a young girl, but wise beyond her years, with a warm concern for others that brought healing to a soul wounded by the brutality of war"?

13. Compare Salinger's treatment of character with Poe's in "The Masque of the Red Death" and Hawthorne's in "The Minister's Black Veil." Which characters seem more real? How did Salinger's choice of realism determine to some extent the form his story would take. What advantages of the symbolic story did he have to gorego?

14. What is Salinger's attitude towards his subject? Provide evidence from the text?

15. Is there a universal human truth expressed through "For Esmé . . ."? If so, what is it? If Salinger had chosen to express it symbolically, what form might his story have taken? Do you think it would have been as effective as the realistic way he chose? Give reasons for your answer.

Suggestions for Composition

1. Salinger makes effective use of comparisons to convey a vivid picture. For example, he says when the children lift their heavy hymnals, they remind him of "underage weight lifters." Find other examples of this device, and explain why they add interest to the story.

2. Write a character study of the narrator as he is revealed through the words and actions of the story.

"How Beautiful With Shoes"
By Wilber Daniel Steele

On first reading, this story may strike you as being very strange. The two main characters are a simple country girl and a madman. Why did Steele choose such characters? Do they seem to you to be as real as Esme and Sergeant X in Salinger's story? Do they represent more than themselves? That is, is Steele using them as symbols to express an idea? What would you say is the theme of the story?

Think about these general questions as you read the story the first time, then go back over it again using the following more specific questions to guide your thinking as you prepare for a class discussion with your teacher.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. The reader is introduced to Mare at the beginning of the story, and Steele presents her as an uneducated, slow-moving, not very bright country girl. Find specific words and phrases that emphasize this characterization of Mare.

2. Early in the story, Steele makes frequent mention of Jewett's "big hands" and "long, flat-tipped fingers." Why do you think he does this?

3. At what time of the year does the story take place? Do you think the author has a reason for choosing this season? Explain.

4. The whole story focuses upon Mare, and we see her changed by the encounter with Jewett. Why do you suppose Steele chose to tell his story using the third person omniscient point of view instead of a first person narrative by the girl herself?

5. What kind of person is Jewett? What device has Steele used to establish Jewett as an intellectual?

6. During the major portion of the story, Mare and Jewett are in conflict. How does the contrast between them heighten the conflict? Do you think Steele means us to interpret their characters symbolically? What quality might each character represent?

7. How many parts are there to the story? Briefly relate what happens in each part. How does the author build suspense during the first half of the story?

8. How has Mare been changed through the encounter with Jewett? How has Steele used the shoes to symbolize this change?

9. The Major part of the story takes place at night. What significance might this have to the meaning of the story?

10. Jewett takes Mare from the barnyard up to the heights. What might this represent? What happens when Mare descends to the barnyard alone in the morning? Does she go back to being the person she has before the experience? Why does she push Ruby away at the end?

11. What is the theme of Steele's story? How does Mare's experience tipify a universal human experience? If knowledge does not bring happiness, why do men pursue knowledge?

12. The simple country person and the madman are traditional figures of wisdom. This story, using these characters, could easily have become unreal and sentimental. How has Steele avoided this pitfall?

Suggestions for Composition

1. Find and read the poems Jewett quotes to Mare.

2. Beauty and suffereing exist together for Jewett. The sunset reminds him of fire and blood. What do these two words suggest? Find other words in the story that have strong connotations, and explain why they are especially effective to use in a story of this nature.

3. According to the old biblical story, suffereing came into the world after Eve atempted Adam with the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The Greek legends tell how Zeus sent suffering into the world to punish man because he sought to know as much as the gods knew. Does knowledge always bring suffering? Would you rather be wise and suffering, like a Socrates, or is it better to be unquestioning and contented like a pig in the barnyard? Write a few paragraphs giving the advantages of both states. In the final paragraph, say which condition you would choose, and give reasons for your choice.

"The Chaser"
By John Collier

The last story in this group is little more than a joke. Like most good jokes, it is brief and does not state the point outright but leaves you, the reader, to figure it out for yourself. Even the names of the characters, Diana and Alan, and the title of the story, "The Chaser," are part of the joke. If you do not see it right away, look up the meanings of the names in an unabridged dictionary, and think about the double meaning of the word "chaser."

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Look at the way the story is printed on the page. What do you notice about it? It could almost have been a play, with the opening paragraphs the stage directions. Why do you think Collier chose to tell his story through conversation?

2. What is Alan's idea of love? What does this tell you about him? What else do you learn about Alan through the conversation?

3. "If I did not sell love potions ....I should not have mentioned the other mater to you." What does this reveal to you about the old man? Why does Alan fail to understand the double-edged nature of the old man's remarks? How does the reader's knowledge increase the humor of the situation?

4. The plot is very simple and the denouement takes place only in the mind of the reader. How does this add to the pleasure of the story?

5. Having chosen to make his story short and dramatic, what did Collier have to sacrifice in order to achieve the effect he desired?

6. Stripping the story down to bare essentials has helped lift it above reality to fantasy. Find examples of irony and understatement that contribute to the light touch.

7. The implications of the "glove cleaner" are really horrible. Why, then, do we find it only amusing?

8. Explain the final irony of the old man's "au revoir." Why is it more effective than a longer and more emphatic statement would have been? For instance, he might have said, "You will be back for the glove cleaner, I'm sure of it:"

9. What comments is Collier making about human behavior? Do you agree with him? Can you back up your opinions with illustrations from your experience?

Suggestions for Composition

1. Young people, especially are often said not to know what is good for them. Perhaps you won't agree. But can you think of anything you wanted desperately, only to find when you finally got it that it was not what you wanted after all? Write an account of your experience.

2. Let us suppose the love potion worked. How do you suppose Alan would react to years of having his wife cling to him every moment of the day? Write a short sequel to "The Chaser" depicting the scene when Alan returns for the "glove cleaner." Tell it in the same manner Collier used, using conversation.

Student Version

THE SCARLET LETTER

by Nathaniel Hawthorne

I. Introduction

In The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne investigates the effect of a single sinful act upon the lives of three people. His key concern is not so much why the sin needed to occur in the first place as it is how the sin stains the lives of the three people. Some might say that there are no real answers to either question; they would agree with Macbeth in saying that life is "a tale told by an idiot."

Hawthorne, however, seems to have seen a purpose or an order in chaotic daily life. Thus, as you read The Scarlet Letter, try to decide what sort of answers Hawthorne is suggesting. One way is to note what happens to the various characters and why it seems to happen. Are they to blame for the directions of their lives, or are they compelled by fate or destiny to do what they did? Nowadays you hear a good deal about people being products of their environment--are the characters in The Scarlet Letter products of their environment? Finally, after noticing how the lives of the three main characters end, ask yourself if the ending of the novel is appropriate to the fictional world Hawthorne has created. Would perhaps other endings have been more appropriate?

Another important concern is the form the novel takes. Here you should note the many parallel scenes. For instance, three key scenes take place on a scaffold or platform in Boston's town square; in each scene the same characters appear, but they behave differently. Also important to the form is the amount of reality used to portray the citizens of seventeenth century Boston. Does the narrator--supposedly writing from an old manuscript--make statements which no historian could make? How evident is it that material in the book is artistically selected and arranged? Would the term fantasy be a good one to use in describing the book? Once you answer these questions, you can decide whether to call the book a novel or a romance. If you decide that it is realistic, then it is a novel. If it has characters, incidents, or settings which are unreal, then it is more accurately called a romance.

But all the foregoing questions only faintly suggest the many associations which you will be able to make among the incidents in The Scarlet Letter. It is a rich literary work, but you will discover its richness only if you bother to make the associations Hawthorne invites you to make.

The questions which follow should help you to make some of the associations which Hawthorne intended. Probably the questions will be most useful if you use them as guide questions. Thus, if you consult them as you read, they will tell you some of the things to look for and to think about. Though some of them may be answered quite briefly, resist the temptation to answer them with a simple yes or no; instead, try to recall statements or incidents in the text which will show that you have proof for your opinions.

II. General Questions

1. One of mankind's oldest questions is why things happen as they do. For instance, why did Hester and Dimmesdale commit the sin of adultery? Were they the only guilty ones and was Chillingworth completely innocent? On pp. 83-84, the narrator considers the various courses open to Hester after she has received the scarlet letter. What reasons does he give for her staying in Boston and not fleeing to some other land and discarding the accursed letter? What seems to control her decision? To what extent does God's power seem to control her actions and the actions of the other characters?

2. The inhabitants of the Puritan community are similar to the chorus in a Greek play; that is, they tell much about the actions of the story and the attitudes of the people and thereby teach lessons of their own. What are some of the most important ways that they show the author's point of view or in other ways point up certain lessons?

3. In the detailed questions both the author and the narrator have been credited with causing certain incidents to happen? Are they one and the same person, or are they different? In questions 4 and 56, you are asked about whom the "we" of the book included. Does the "we" include the author and the narrator, or does it include only one of them? (Hint: Recall that the "I" of Roughing It was not Samuel Clemens himself, though he was the author of the book.)

4. Do you ever have any doubts about whether or not the narrator knows everything about the characters? Would you say that the narrator was omniscient?

5. As you will see in the detailed questions, the narrator often contrasts Puritan customs with customs of the 1850's. Which era does he seem to approve of? Looking at the incidents from the author's point of view, what do you think Hawthorne felt about Puritan customs?

6. Hawthorne in his preface to The House of Seven Gables defined a novel as a form of prose fiction which "presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience." He defined a romance as a form of prose fiction which was not completely realistic. Thus, in a romance the author is allowed "to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture." Using Hawthorne's own definitions, would you say that The Scarlet Letter was a romance or a novel?

7. One principle widely used by Rod Serling and other television and movie writers is that a fantastic story must be based on fact if it is to successfully convincing. Many poor horror and science fiction movies are unsuccessful chiefly because they never draw the reader far enough into the plot. The best movies of this type are solidly based in fact so that the necessary elements of fantasy are quite convincing or credible. Would you say that Hawthorne was conscious of this principle when he wrote The Scarlet Letter? Explain.

8. Some readers of The Scarlet Letter have contended that Hester's fate is inappropriate and that throughout the book Hawthorne's sympathetic treatment of Hester leads readers to believe that she and Dimmesdale should be able to run away to a happy life together. These readers would argue that the appropriate ending should be similar to a "Hollywood ending." Would you have liked the book better if Hawthorne had allowed the lovers to sail away into the sunset, leaving Roger Chillingworth stomping and cursing on the pier? Would such an ending have been consistent with the rest of the book?

9. Of the many symbols in The Scarlet Letter, surely Hester's scarlet letter is the most important. As with all literary symbols, Hester's "A" does not have a single interpretation or meaning, but it changes as it moves among different characters and situations. Consider its relationship to each of the following: Hester, Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, Pearl, the community, the bond-servant, and the Indians.

10. There are many other symbols in the novel besides Hester's scarlet letter. How many others do you recall from your reading of the book? If necessary, you might look back over the detailed questions, which often suggested the symbolic meaning of something in the book.

11. Many of the discussion questions thus far have pointed to the basic dualism of The Scarlet Letter. The author's use of opposing pairs cannot be overlooked. For example, you have already discussed the following pairs:

Free Will (Choice) vs. Determinism (Fate)

Forest vs. Town

Light (Sunshine) vs. Dark (Shadow)

Rosebush vs. Prison

Each of these pairs represents only a single strand of the novel. Isolating them for the sake of discussion is necessary, but dangerous, for all the strands are woven together; each is dependent on the whole. Still, if this danger is recognized and avoided, there is value in identifying these pairs and seeing how they serve the whole. Consider the following and show how these opposing themes and concepts work independently, while at the same time they depend on all the others for their full meaning:

Heart (Hester) vs. Intellect (Dimmesdale)

Indian or Mariner vs. Puritan

Red vs. Black

Merrie Old England vs. Puritan New England

Roger Chillingworth (Possessed by hate) vs. Roger Chillingworth (As intellectual)

III. Detailed Questions

Chapter 1. The Prison Door

1. What ironic comment does the narrator make about the founders of a new colony?

2. What do the ugly vegetation and the wild rose symbolize? Do the colors seem to be significant?

3. What does the narrator suggest that you might gain from reading this "tale of human frailty and sorrow"?

Chapter 2: The Market Place

4. When the narrator uses "our" and "us" on p. 58, of whom is

he speaking? Is this the same point of view as the narrator's use of "we" on p. 56?

5. Is the narrator completely serious in his contrast of Puritan customs with the customs of his own period (the 1850' s)?

6. What does he seem to think about Puritan women? Does he want you to approve or disapprove of them?

7. How effective is the Puritan method of punishment? Is it effective for Hester? Explain.

8. What do you learn about Hester's character from the brief summary of her previous life?

Chapter 3: The Recognition

9. What hints in this chapter does the narrator give about the identity of the stranger whom she recognizes in the crowd around the scaffold?

10. Contrast the speeches of the two ministers--the Reverend Mr. Wilson and the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale. Which man is closer to the stereotype of the Puritan minister?

11. Is Hester's scarlet letter consistently described throughout this chapter? What sort of descriptive words or phrases does the narrator use?

Chapter 4: The Interview

12. By using the facts in this chapter and the veiled references in the previous two chapters, can you reconstruct the prior history of Hester and Roger Chillingworth?

13. Do you think that Hester's actions and statements are psychologically realistic?

14. From the interview in this chapter, what sort of marriage do you suspect Hester and Chillingworth had?

15. Chillingworth in the last few lines of the chapter assures Hester that she has not bargained away her own soul. Whose soul is he thinking about? What courses of action are open to him since Hester will not reveal who is the father of Pearl?

Chapter 5: Hester at Her Needle

16. How does the place where Hester live symbolize her relationship with the townspeople?

17. What do the townspeople think about Hester's needlework? Does her needlework further symbolize her relationship to the town?

18. Are the townspeople consistent in their treatment of Hester? Does the narrator want you to approve of them? Is the narrator at all ironic in his presentation of the townspeople?

Chapter 6: Pearl

19. What signs in Pearl's character show the sinful nature of her birth? Is Pearl punished for the sin of her parents?

20. In what ways does Hester's treatment of Pearl show the unique quality of their relationship?

Chapter 7: The Governor's Hall

21. In what ways is Pearl similar to Hester's scarlet letter?

22. What contrasts are drawn between Puritan customs and English ones? Which does the narrator expect you to be most sympathetic with?

Chapter 8: The Elf-Child and the Minister

23. What impression does Pearl make on each of the men in this chapter? Why does she tell Mr. Wilson that she "had been plucked by her mother off the bush of wild roses that grew by the prison door"?

24. Are there any hints about why Dimmesdale looks as he does and why he defends Hester and Pearl as he does? In particular, what does he say about Pearl's father?

25. Does the narrator expect you to take Mistress Hibbens seriously?

Chapter 9: The Leech

26. What accounts for the friendship which grew up between Chillingworth and Dimmesdale?

27. Why did Hawthorne entitle this chapter "The Leech"?

28. Why is the narrator so tentative in supplying certain background facts in this chapter (e.g., on pp. 125-126)? What sort of atmosphere does this approach give the book?

Chapter 10: The Leech and His Patient

29. What sort of comparisons does the narrator use in describing Roger Chillingworth's probing of Dimmesdale's heart?

30. Are there any grounds in the text for saying that Roger Chillingworth is similar to the Devil? Are any of Chillingworth's arguments Devil-like in their approach and content?

31. What part do Hester and Pearl play in this chapter?

32. How specifically does the narrator reveal what Roger Chillingworth discovered on Dimmesdale's breast? Explain the narrator's motive.

Chapter 11: The Interior of a Heart

33. What is ironical about Dimmesdale's position in the Puritan community? How does this irony affect him?

34. How has the relationship between Chillingworth and Dimmesdale changed?

Chapter 12: The Minister's Vigil

35. How would you characterize Dimmesdale's feelings and actions on the scaffold? Are they reasonable in human terms? Are they sufficiently motivated?

36. What significant contrasts do you notice between this scene and the earlier one in chapters 2 and 3?

37. Can you justify the author's use of each of the characters in this scene? What does each of them accomplish by his presence?

38. Do you feel that the actions and occurrences in this scene are credible? To what extent has the author evidently organized his material? To what extent could this scene be called realistic?

Chapter 13: Another View of Hester

39. In what ways have Hester and her scarlet letter changed since the beginning of her punishment? Are the feelings of the townspeople toward her reasonable?

40. How many ways in this chapter are light and sunshine contrasted with darkness and shadow? What do these opposing symbols represent?

Chapter 14: Hester and the Physician

41. What changes have occurred in Roger Chillingworth since Hester's meeting with him in Chapter 3? How do you account for these changes?

42. Who is to blame for all that has happened to the main characters? Are they themselves personally accountable? Is Fate or is Chance more to blame for the situation they find themselves in?

Chapter 15: Hester and Pearl

43. Whom does Hester blame for the misery surrounding her? Do you think she is right or is she just excusing her own guilt?

44. How normal for a young child are the questions which Pearl asks Hester? What do Pearl's questions accomplish?

Chapter 16: A Forest Walk

45. What do the constant references to sunshine in this chapter accomplish? How does the sunshine fit into the symbolism of Hester's scarlet letter?

46. What is the real name of the Black Man? Does the narrator expect you to believe Mistress Hibbens' superstitious tale about the Black Man? Explain.

47. Is it in any way fitting that Hester and Dimmesdale should meet in the forest rather than in the town? What does the forest itself seem to symbolize?

Chapter 17: The Pastor and His Parishoner

48. What further ironies in Dimmesdale's position are revealed in his conversation with Hester?

Chapter 18: A Flood of Sunshine

49. What allows Hester to be the one on which Dimmesdale is able to lean for support and encouragement? Why does she seem to be stronger than he is?

50. What connections do you see between the burst of sunlight which smiled down on Hester and the wild forest surrounding the lovers?

51. What is Pearl's relationship with the forest? What evidence was there in earlier chapters of this relationship?

Chapter 19: The Child at the Brook-Side

52. Do you feel that Hester and Dimmesdale in their conversation are reflecting human feelings? In other words, would you say that it is a realistic scene?

53. Why does Pearl wash away the minister's kiss? Why is it so important to Pearl that the minister show his love for her and her mother?

54. Would you say that Pearl's actions are motivated to the point that they are reasonable and human?

55. Why does the author have Pearl behave as she does toward both Hester and Dimmesdale? What moral is he drawing from Pearl's actions?

Chapter 20: The Minister in a Maze

56. When the narrator uses "we" on p. 203, of whom is he speaking? Is this the same use of the first person pronoun as was mentioned in question 4? What is the effect of this use of "we"?

57. Do Dimmesdale's actions and feelings support his idea that he made a compact with the Devil in the forest? Explain.

58. From the way Dimmesdale is presented, does the narrator seem to approve of his decision to run away? Do you think that

Dimmesdale makes the right decision?

59. Which incidents in this chapter are ironical? How does their presence in the chapter affect the overall tone?

Chapter 21: The New England Holiday

60. How well does the holiday scene fit the stereotyped idea of the dark-visaged, somber Puritans?

61. What do the groups of sailors and Indians show about Puritan society and its beliefs?

62. Why does the narrator supply Pearl with the questions in this chapter? Do you find them contrived or artificial?

Chapter 22: The Procession

63. Do you think the narrator approves of the Puritan procession? Does he approve of the Puritans themselves?

64. What is the narrator suggesting by his continual contrast of the forest and the market-place? Which people in this chapter and in the previous chapters belong to one place or the other?

65. What does the author accomplish by creating a character like Mistress Hibbens?

66. Before the shipmaster's message (p. 229), do you find any hints or foreshadowing that Hester's plan for escape will not be successful? Were there any similar indications in previous chapters?

Chapter 23: The Revelation

67. What ironies appear in the townspeople's reception of Dimmesdale's speech?

68. What parallels do you notice between this scene on the scaffold and the two earlier ones?

69. How carefully earlier in the book has the author prepared for Pearl's final acceptance of Dimmesdale in this chapter?

70. Do you feel that the incidents in this scene are contrived and artificial? What about the earlier scaffold scenes?

Chapter 24: Conclusion

71. Why is the narrator so ambiguous about revealing exactly what the people saw on Dimmesdale's breast? Do you think the narrator should have pretended that he definitely knew all the facts?

72. What in the book justifies the narrator's use of the word "parable" to describe certain actions?

73. Would it have been better if the narrator had let you draw your own conclusions about the morals or lessons in the book?

74. Do you feel that the end of Hester's life was appropriate, considering the earlier incidents in the novel? In other words, do the incidents in the earlier chapters sufficiently motivate the fate of her and the other characters?

75. What is the significance of the "herald's wording" on the tombstone? Do the colors--red and black--symbolize a central opposition within the book? Explain.

IV. Writing Assignments and Supplementary Activities

1. If you had to make The Scarlet Letter into a movie, how would you proceed? What would happen to all of the comments and observations by the narrator? How would you manage such elements of fantasy as Mistress Hibbens and her night-flying activities? How would you handle scenes such as the final scaffold one in which the narrator refuses to say exactly what the various people saw? Write a movie or television script for a key scene (e.g., one of the three scaffold scenes); be sure to include careful stage directions.

2. What would happen if the novel had been told from a different point of view? Assume that everything had been seen through the eyes of a single character. If you had to learn everything through Hester's eyes alone, what bits of information would have been lost? Would there be any advantages in using Hester as the sole narrator? Try rewriting a very short section of the book as it might appear through the eyes of any of the main characters.

3. Read Hawthorne's The House of Seven Gables and compare it

with The Scarlet Letter. The following topics are only some of the many possible ones:

a. To what extent do both novels deal with the theme of sin and its influence on human affairs? In particular, does sin seem to pass from generation to generation in both books?

b. Are both books properly called romances? Does either of them seem to stress fantasy more than the other?

c. Does Hawthorne use settings in both books to reflect the moral condition of his characters? For instance, does the same contrast between light and darkness occur in The House of Seven Gables as in The Scarlet Letter?

d. The Scarlet Letter is tightly organized around the scaffold scenes. Is there a similar structure of any sort in The House of Seven Gables?

e. Do you find the same amount of irony in The House of Seven Gables as there is in The Scarlet Letter? Is Hawthorne ever ironic in his choice of chapter titles?

4. Hawthorne wrote fine short stories; in many of them he used themes and techniques very similar to ones in The Scarlet Letter. Read several of his stories and compare them with The Scarlet Letter. The following are only suggested topics:

a. In what ways is Hester's "A" similar to the minister's black veil in Hawthorne's story "The Minister's Black Veil"?

b. Does Hawthorne use fantasy in his short stories in the same way he used it in The Scarlet Letter? Good stories for this might be "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," "Rappaccini's Daughter," or "The Birthmark."

c. One of Hawthorne's stories is "Feathertop: A Moralized Legend." Just from its title you should see certain parallels with Hawthorne's technique in The Scarlet Letter. See if you see other parallels in the story itself.

d. How does Hawthorne use irony in "The Ambitious Guest" or "The Great Stone Face"?

e. What is Hawthorne's view of the Puritans as presented in "The Maypole of Merry Mount"? Is it similar to the one given in The Scarlet Letter?

5. Is Hawthorne's picture of the Puritans in The Scarlet Letter accurate? Investigate and find out. In addition to the more common sources such as encyclopedias, you might see if your library has any of the following books:

William Bradford, Journal or Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647

John Winthrop, Sr., Journal

Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., The Puritans

Mark Van Doren, ed., Samuel Sewall's Diary

6. The Scarlet Letter has been called a parable, an allegory, and a fable. Define these terms and explain why they might be applied to the book.

7. Read Arthur Miller's The Crucible. Does it seem more credible than The Scarlet Letter? Explain. Which author seems to present the Puritans least sympathetically?

THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE

by Thomas Hardy

I. Introduction

While you were studying The Scarlet Letter, you talked about the differences between novel and romance. Novel aims at realism, at being like the world as the reader knows it. Romance, on the other hand, sacrifices realism, selecting details so that everything further clarifies or emphasizes the ideas the author wishes to present, whether or not the result is lifelike. While you are reading The Mayor of Casterbridge, think about whether it is more like novel or romance in its form, its characters, and its setting. And don't forget that a book need not be all novel or all romance; it can be a mixture of the two. There are novelistic romances, romantic novels, and books which seem to be exactly between the two.

It is often noted that Hardy wrote stories which take the form of tragedy. Try to recall the tragic structure as you saw it in Oedipus, Macbeth, and Ghosts (assuming you have already read these plays). How is the form of The Mayor of Casterbridge like these? Do you see any differences: Which does it seem most like? In the tragic form, the character's fall is caused by fate, by a flaw in his character, or by a combination of the two. Try to decide which causes Henchard's fall. Some people say that the fate of Hardy's characters seems so firmly fixed after the first few chapters that he could have stopped writing there. As you read, you might think from time to time about whether a choice is open to Henchard, about whether he could avoid his mistakes, about whether his destiny is fixed when he is twenty years old.

In most literature, the characters are people who are a great deal like others, so that the things the author says will seem to be true of everyone, but who are also individual enough to be interesting. Examine Henchard carefully to see whether he seems more universal or more individualistic. Especially in the first two chapters, see if you can pick out any devices which Hardy uses to make him seem typical. Do these devices succeed? Think about whether the later strange events take away any of the original universality.

Although he seems to be primarily concerned with Henchard, Hardy spends quite a bit of time developing the characters of Farfrae, Lucetta, and Elizabeth-Jane. So it must be that these characters somehow contribute to the things he wants to say about Henchard. Consider the similarities and differences between these other characters and Henchard.

Particularly, try to decide whether any of them have whatever personal characteristics cause Henchard's fall. If so, do these characteristics also cause those who share them to fall? Do any characters rise because they do not have these characteristics? Answers to questions like these should lead you to deciding what the general subject of the book is.

Hardy thought of himself as a poet more than as a novelist. And even more than a novelist, a poet is apt to consider every detail before putting it in, to use every bit of description or conversation or commentary for a purpose. This puts on the reader the burden of giving attention to every word. Many of us tend to skip over passages of description or commentary to get to "the story." This may be especially tempting in the first chapter, which contains quite a bit of description. But by now you should realize that it is impossible to understand the whole of a piece of literature by reading only the most active parts and skipping those which provide comment on or background for the activity. In Hardy it is particularly dangerous to do this, for then one loses all that he says through his careful attention to details.

II. General Questions

1. How do Henchard and Farfrae differ in temperament and in character? Henchard, as you have seen earlier, is dominated by impulsive action. What controls most of Farfrae's actions? Why did he recover so readily after Lucetta's death? What, if anything, do you detect here in Hardy's attitude toward Farfrae?

2. Often the rustics in a novel make a telling comment about their "betters." What seems to be the function of Hardy's country folk? Is his use of them similar to Hawthorne's use of the townspeople in _The Scarlet Letter_? Explain.

3. Hardy sometimes uses setting and background almost as a part of an event. How does this help the reader to understand what is happening? Note the description of the countryside through which Henchard and Susan walk prior to the sale. How does Hardy use setting here to foreshadow events to come as well as to set the tone of the novel? Can you find other descriptive passages that tend at once to emphasize and to comment upon events?

4. Hardy appears to use the town of Casterbridge itself to complement the downfall of Henchard. A kind of social decay of the town runs parallel to the moral decay of the protagonist. Find examples that illustrate the ugliness, greed, paralysis, and disease of the

ancient village. Reread the last page of the novel. How have the town and the people changed? Is this significant? In what way?

5. Is Henchard in this novel crucified by a brutal and depraved society, or is he disabled by his own crime and guilt? What evidence can you find to support your view?

6. To what degree does Fate prevent happiness for Henchard? for Lucetta? To what degree is the happiness of Farfrae the result of Fate? of Elizabeth-Jane? In what instances does chance alone determine the course of events? It has been suggested that Hardy here takes a Darwinian attitude, showing the survival of the fittest. (You will at this point surely recall London's Call of the Wild.) Is Hardy's view a Darwinian one? Do the thoughts of Elizabeth-Jane in the last paragraph seem to express the same view of life taken by Hardy throughout the book?

7. Henchard goes to the prophet Fall to determine whether the good weather will continue. Is there a similar character in Oedipus Rex? What is the function of the prophet in the novel?

8. Many instances of irony are to be found in the novel. Reread the scene in which the townspeople watch outside as the mayor and his friends dine. Do you detect any irony here? Explain. Can you recall other scenes in the novel which are ironic? Would you say that this novel was more or less ironic than The Scarlet Letter?

9. Can you explain the importance of each of the following incidents? How is each related to Henchard's fall from fortune?

a. Elizabeth-Jane serves guests at the Three Mariners.

b. Susan overhears a conversation between Henchard and Farfrae at the Three Mariners.

c. Susan turns her husband aside from the liquor tent he is about to enter and steers him into the furmity-tent.

d. Henchard reads a letter--too soon.

e. Susan is referred to as "The Ghost" because she is so pale.

f. Jopp reports for an interview on Saturday rather than on a Friday.

g. Susan Henchard's "extreme simplicity" and deep sense of propriety

h. Henchard is unable to convince Farfrae that he is needed at home.

i. Henchard relents and sends back Lucetta's letters.

10. Hardy refers to Susan as "The Ghost." Why is such a name appropriate above and beyond the fact that she was pale?

11. In your discussion of The Scarlet Letter, you learned that it was more accurately called a romance than a novel. Do you recall the reasons for this decision? If not, review the definitions for these two terms. Is The Mayor of Casterbridge a novel, or is it a romance? (Don't forget that a book need not be all novel or all romance; it can be a mixture of the two.) Be prepared to defend your decision on this question by use of specific passages from the book.

12. Several of the previous questions compared The Mayor of Casterbridge with plays you have previously read, such as Oedipus and Macbeth. Since there are a good many similarities, why do you think Hardy didn't write a play instead of the romance or novel which he did write?

13. Earlier this year you learned that a short story and a novel (or a romance) differ in ways other than mere length. Obviously The Mayor of Casterbridge is much longer than a short story, but can you find other ways in which it differs from a story?

14. Hardy has often been praised for the exactness of his countryman's eye. Can you find passages that reflect his close observation of nature?

15. An author may reveal a character solely through the character's direct actions. On the other hand, an author may directly inform his readers about his hero's character. To which school does Hardy seem to lean? Back up your statement with some examples.

16. How does Hardy foreshadow the marriage of Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae? the defeat of Henchard? of Lucetta? the success of Farfrae? Does he make any early suggestions that Elizabeth-Jane is not his daughter?

III. Detailed Questions

Chapters 1 and 2

1. These two chapters provide a kind of prelude to the actual

tragedy. In what way is this comparable to Oedipus Rex? To Macbeth?

2. Why do you think Hardy avoided alluding to Henchard and his wife by name in the opening paragraphs? What purpose does the detailed description of the country-side serve?

3. Although Henchard is described as being very much like any laborer of his time and place, Hardy does point out an individual trait or two that the hay-trusser seems to possess. Why do you think he took such care, for instance, to let the reader know he was dealing with a "perverse" character?

4. Do you detect any instances of foreshadowing in the first chapter? Explain.

5. Do you detect any irony in the manner in which the Henchards decided upon the furmity-tent for their refreshments?

6. Reread the "sale" of the wife. What interruptions occurred? Henchard doggedly returned again and again to the matter. Of what significance is this in relation to the general theme? Does Susan Henchard's character make the sale possible? Explain.

7. In what way does Hardy attempt to make the wife-sale incident believable? Is he successful?

8. There is a considerable lapse of time between chapter 2 and 3. How does Hardy achieve a sense of unity in spite of this lapse?

9. Hardy takes some pains to show us that Henchard has not really changed since he sold his wife eighteen years before. How is this accomplished? What traits still predominate?

10. Why do you think Hardy tells so little of the details of Henchard's rise in fortune? What traits appear to have been responsible for his success? Are these same traits responsible for his reverses? Explain.

11. It was apparently chance as well as Henchard's perversity and impulsiveness that led to his selling Susan. Do both these factors--fate as well as flaws in character--lead to his hiring Farfrae? Explain.

12. Reread page 39. What irony do you detect in the exchange between Henchard and the heckler?

13. Why did Farfrae pause outside the window? Is this reason significant in relation to the theme of the novel? In what way? What

events were set in motion when Farfrae paused to listen to the discussion?

14. Reread the passages describing the Three Mariners (pp. 42-43). Is there any significance in the imagery Hardy employs?

15. We see Henchard through the eyes of Casterbridge (Coney, Solomon Longways, etc.) and simultaneously see him through Susan Henchard's eyes (she knows his past), as well as through the eyes of Elizabeth-Jane, a stranger. Yet throughout these early chapters (5, 6, and 7), we also see Henchard through Hardy's eyes. How--if in any way--do these "portraits" differ? Does the resulting image in the reader's mind differ, at this point, from Susan's? from Elizabeth-Jane's? from the rustics? In what way? And why?

16. Do you detect any irony in Christopher Coney's comment (p. 53) on Farfrae's love of country? What do you learn here of importance about the genial young Scotsman?

17. In what way is the picture of Casterbridge that evolves in the discussion (p. 43) between Farfrae and the other guests at the Three Mariners of importance to the general structure of the novel?

18. Can you find an example of the author speaking directly to the reader in chapter 9? Why do you think he "intruded" at this point?

19. Most of The Mayor of Casterbridge is arranged chronologically. However, a minor flashback occurs in Chapter 9. Why do you think Hardy employed this technique here?

20. Hardy often allows the actions of his characters to color their very surroundings. Read pages 69-71. How does the description of the Ring tend to reflect Henchard's actions?

21. Sometimes seemingly unimportant incidents turn out to have great significance. Such was the rather summary dismissal of Jobb who had come to be interviewed for a job. How did this affect Henchard later?

22. Why do you think Hardy allowed Henchard to "confess" his past to Farfrae? What future actions are thus made possible?

23. Why did Henchard reject Elizabeth-Jane after her mother's death? Do you consider his reading of the letter a result of chance? Or was it a result of Henchard acting improperly? Or both? What is ironic in this situation?

24. What causes Henchard's relationship to Farfrae to become strained and uneasy? Note that after this occurs, Henchard is almost completely isolated, although he is still a respected businessman. At this point, what possibilities are open to Henchard? What do you think determined his following the course he chose? Given Henchard's character (with its strong and weak points), would it at this point be impossible for him to escape self-destruction?

Chapters 23-45

25. What marks the real beginning of Henchard's sharp descent? Is it chance that throws Lucetta and Farfrae together? How do Henchard's actions further alienate him from Lucetta?

26. Do you see any similarity between Henchard and Lucetta? Both, of course, have a "past" that haunts them, and both, in a sense, seem to choose a course of action destined if not to destroy them, then to place them in great jeopardy. Beyond this, however, what specific traits and actions seem to be similar?

27. What event is responsible for revealing Henchard's past? Can this incident be attributed to Fate or is Henchard responsible?

28. How does Fate in the form of weather strike a savage blow at Henchard?

29. What incident shows that Henchard has lost even his once splendid physical strength? What images does Hardy use at this point? Do you feel that they are effective?

30. Who urges Jopp to read the letters he is carrying to Lucetta? Is there anything ironic about this? In what way is Henchard actually responsible for the skimmity-ride? How does he seek to alleviate his guilt? If Lucetta had not insisted upon the return of the letters, might the skimmity-ride have been averted? Explain.

31. In his extremity of guilt and loneliness, Henchard turns to Elizabeth-Jane and allows himself, for the first time, to respond to the affection she has long offered. What evidence threatens to rob him of the comfort her presence brings him? What irony do you see in Henchard's attempting to save his relationship with Elizabeth-Jane by driving away her father?

32. How does Chance, which has dealt Henchard severe blows in the past, save him from suicide? Why doesn't the author allow Henchard to commit suicide?

33. How does Henchard's attitude toward Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae's romance reveal the spent strength of the old fighter?

34. What is the final incident which drives Henchard from Casterbridge? Reread the paragraphs in which Hardy describes the leavetaking. In what way is Henchard the same when he leaves as when he enters? How has he changed? How does Hardy show the parallels in the situations?

35. What significance do you see in the wedding present Henchard brought to Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae? It is forgotten and later discovered, the bird having perished "in his prison." What does this symbolize? Do you think Hardy is revealing his own attitude here toward a man caught in a world he never made? Do you see any foreshadowing here?

36. What irony do you detect in the circumstances of Henchard's death? What does the will tell about the way Henchard felt about himself? Had you recognized the depth of his bitterness before?

IV. Writing Exercises and Supplementary Activities

1. Aristotle suggested that a tragic hero should be "a person neither eminently virtuous or just, nor yet involved in misfortune by vice or villainy, but by some error of human frailty; and this person should also be someone of high fame and flourishing prosperity." Is this true of Henchard?

2. Henchard, like Macbeth, whom you encountered earlier this year, is gradually isolated from his friends and loved ones. Compare the downfall of these two tragic heroes in as many ways as possible. For example, the death of Lady Macbeth and the death of Susan Henchard occurred, in both instances, at a most inopportune moment for the heroes. How did his wife's death affect Macbeth? Henchard?

3. Their pasts loom menacingly over both Henchard and Oedipus. Are there other similarities between the two? What differences are apparent? Write a few paragraphs explaining either some of the more obvious differences or some of the similarities.

4. What point of view--in the limited technical sense--does Hardy employ in The Mayor of Casterbridge? Note that sometimes you watch events through the eyes of one character, sometimes another. Is there an apparent reason for these changes? For example, why do you think Hardy (1) allowed us to see Henchard's death, for example, only through Abel Whipple's eyes; (2) had Lucetta's confession to Farfrae of

her past occur off-stage? Organize your reasons into a short theme.

5. What changes would have been made in The Mayor of Casterbridge if Hardy had had a single main character narrate the story? For example, what changes would have been necessary if Henchard told his own story? Would he have been the tragic hero, or would he have defended his actions more and thus destroyed some of the sympathy for him Hardy intended? What incidents and scenes in the novel would have been omitted because there would be no way for Henchard to know of them? Pick Henchard or any other main character, and write a short theme on one of the following topics:

a. If the character you have chosen had been the narrator, what would have been the most significant changes in the novel?

b. Using the character you have chosen as the narrator, rewrite or at least sketch the action of a short scene.

6. We have often seen in the past the impossibility of totally separating form, point of view, and subject. You have doubtless noted that the subject of this novel--Henchard's rise and fall from fortune following the sale of his wife--could scarce be separated from the form in which the novel has been cast. Certainly Hardy's attitude toward Chance as it affects Henchard is a part of the subject. Can you think of other, more specific ways in which subject, form, and point of view merge? Write a paragraph or so showing the essential unity of the three in this novel.

7. Setting sometimes becomes a part of the subject, too. You will recall, for example, that Poe in "The Masque of the Red Death" merged setting with subject. Is this sometimes true of this novel? Discuss, giving specific examples.

8. Several of the earlier questions have stressed the fact that Hardy is a master of descriptive details, especially architectural details. If the novel were being made into a movie, how would these descriptive details be shown? Of course, they would all be shown visually, but how would the camera shots be managed? Would the camera be far away or close? Would it shoot from below the characters, on a level with them, or above them? Would there be any fade outs? How would the lighting affect the visual effect of the scenes? Pick a single scene (e. g., the opening scene or the first scene in the Three Mariners) and outline a movie script, giving details about the camera shots which would be necessary and effective.

9. Our sympathies are usually with the protagonist. Hardy takes care that we shall not be alienated from Henchard; though we may pity

him, we do not hate him. Discuss the various methods Hardy has used to win and hold our sympathies.

10. Hawthorne and Hardy were somewhat at odds in their attitude toward free will. Although Henchard's actions influenced events in The Mayor of Casterbridge, chance occurrences sometimes nullified his efforts to rectify his past mistakes. Compare the actions of the protagonists in the two novels--The Scarlet Letter and The Mayor of Casterbridge. Can you find an instance in the former where Fate plays a part in the course events take? Discuss.

11. Some authors create characters of a two-dimensional nature; we call them caricatures. Usually in such characters only one or two characteristics are stressed. (Dickens' Mr. Micawber, for example.) Other characters are referred to as "rounded" because they are, like real people, neither all good nor all bad. Where does Henchard fit? Farfrae? Lucetta? Elizabeth-Jane? Susan? Try to show conclusively in each case whether the character is "rounded," or whether he is two-dimensional and "flat."

12. Hardy suggests an attitude toward civilization when, in describing Susan, he says that the beauties of her face when looking at her child may result from nature; from civilization comes, however, the "hard, half-apathetic expression of one who deems anything possible at the hands of Time and Chance, except, perhaps, fair play" (p. 8). To what extent are the tragic results of the story the effect of civilization rather than of Chance and individual characters? How would the story be different if all characters were willing to ignore the opinions of other "civilized" human beings?

13. Have you ever observed any instances in which some chance incident seemed to influence your life or someone else's all out of proportion to its initial importance? If not, then perhaps you can think of such an incident in the life of a prominent person whose autobiography or biography you have read. Select such an incident and describe its effect. Did you--or the other person--seem to have any choice at all? Could your actions have nullified the effect of such an occurrence?

14. Although Hardy is known as a novelist, he also wrote short stories. Some of his finer short stories are "The Three Strangers," "The Distracted Preacher," "The Withered Arm," and "For Conscience' Sake." Look up these or some of his others, and then compare them with The Mayor of Casterbridge. Does Fate have the same role in his short stories as it has in The Mayor of Casterbridge?

15. If you liked *The Mayor of Casterbridge,* try reading one of Hardy's other fine novels. His best and most widely known ones are the following:

Far from the Madding Crowd

Jude the Obscure

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

The Return of the Native

While reading, contrast Hardy's technique in the one you have chosen with his technique in *The Mayor of Casterbridge.* Then pick one element of contrast and develop it into a short theme.

THE GREAT GATSBY

by F. Scott Fitzgerald

I. Introduction

The Great Gatsby is the last of the novels you will read this year and is the most modern of the three. It is set early in the 1920's, so as you read the book try to remember everything you know about "flappers" and page-boy haircuts, Prohibition and the Charleston, all parts of what have been called "the Roaring Twenties." This pleasure-seeking society we often associate with the Twenties is depicted in The Great Gatsby and will provide for you an important background to Jay Gatsby's story. As you read, find the three different parts, or classes, of society that are told about and ask yourself several questions: In what ways are these classes similar and in what ways different? Which one is better than the others or are they all equally bad or good?

Besides being concerned with the society's structure, you will also want to analyze the characters for their differing views. The character you will want to center on most is Jay Gatsby, and perhaps the easiest way to analyze him will be to review his life chronologically, in the order in which it happened from his youth to his death. This should help you discover what Gatsby's principal aim is throughout his life. Again such questions as, when did Gatsby first realize this desire? and did he achieve it? should interest you. As you go on, you will need to know why he gave such lavish, wild parties, and then suddenly stopped giving them, why he wanted Daisy to say she loved him alone, and why he did not tell who was driving the hit-and-run car. Finally, you will want to ask yourself if Gatsby's story is a tragedy, whether he gets isolated like Michael Henchard in The Mayor of Casterbridge, and in what way, if any, his fate differs from Henchard's.

Another character of great importance is Nick Carraway. In him, you have a chance to study a different kind of narrator than the omniscient narrators of both The Scarlet Letter and The Mayor of Casterbridge. What does the fact that a character who takes part in the action he describes is also the narrator do to our point of view of the other characters? Why is it as important, in other words, to analyze the narrator of this book as it is to analyze the other characters? When you are concerned with Nick, discover what two possibilities of action, or two ways of living, he seems to have. As the novel progresses, which kind of life does he choose to follow and why does he commit himself to that one? In addition, you will want to question your own opinion of Nick himself--is he as honest as he claims to be, even in his affair with Jordan Baker?

Each of the other characters--Daisy, Tom, Myrtle, and Jordan, in particular--will need the same careful attention that you will give Gatsby and Nick. But, more important, you will also want to discuss the form of the book--is it a romance like The Scarlet Letter or might it be a novel, even more novelistic than The Mayor of Casterbridge? Also, you will notice that the book is told with a mixed-up time sequence, for Gatsby's history is told in flashbacks in between other parts of the story rather than all at once. Your studies in Rhetoric should help you find out why, for as you know, the arrangement of material is a good indication of what the author thinks about that material. Analyze this book in that way to find out why Nick Carraway does not tell us all of Gatsby's background earlier. You might also find as you read several references to Gatsby's desire as a quest, much like those journeys of King Arthur's knights you read about in the ninth grade. Find these passages and discover in what ways Gatsby's life is like a quest.

Finally, some analysis of the novel as genre will help you tie together your interpretations of the three books you have read. What kind of stories seemsbest suited to prose narrative instead of drama or poetry? Are the stories of The Scarlet Letter, The Mayor of Casterbridge, and The Great Gatsby probably best told in prose? What would be left out if they had been written as plays? Such larger questions about any novel you read should make that novel more meaningful to you.

II. General Questions

1. The entire action takes place on Long Island, New York, but we are shown three different "worlds" typified by Tom and Daisy, by Gatsby, and by the Wilsons. Describe life in each world, and compare them with each other. Is one shown as being any better than the other two? Give reasons for your answer.

2. Gatsby must be understood against the background of the three societies. Only gradually is he revealed to us, and not in chronological order. Now that you have read the whole book, reconstruct the story of his life, beginning with his childhood. How does Gatsby differ from all the other characters in the book?

3. Several of the previous questions have talked about Gatsby's quest for an ideal or dream existence. How would you characterize the dream world which Gatsby seeks? How close is it to the great American dream of the "good life"?

4. When Fitzgerald allows Gatsby to be defeated, is he creating a tragic hero of the same sort you met in Oedipus, Macbeth, or The Mayor of Casterbridge? Support your view by specific references.

5. What do you think Fitzgerald is saying when he allows Gatsby to be defeated? Is he saying that it is foolish to believe in an ideal, or is he merely criticizing the particular ideal which Gatsby chose?

6. Why do you suppose Fitzgerald chose to tell his story through Nick Carroway, who also takes part in the action of the story? What is the advantage of this method? What are the limitations? How would it have changed the story if it had been told from a third person omniscient point of view?

7. Towards the end of the story, Nick tells Gatsby "They're a rotten crowd. . . You're worth the whole bunch put together." What has made him change his opinion of the man from his original "unaffected scorn"? Do you agree with Nick's change of opinion?

8. How has Fitzgerald used Jordan Baker to demonstrate Nick's character development? Why does Nick reject her, even though he is "half in love with her"?

9. What does Gatsby mean when he says that Daisy's voice is "full of money"? How does this idea of Daisy relate to his dream?

10. Why did Nick reveal Gatsby's story in bits and pieces? What is the point of the flashback technique? How does this compare with the principles of persuasion you have studied in the rhetoric units this year?

11. In the discussion of The Scarlet Letter, you saw how Hawthorne organized his book around the three key scenes on the scaffold. What similar pattern of scenes do you see in The Great Gatsby? Which author more clearly strived to have the scenes reflect his thematic development down to the smallest detail?

12. Does Nick express the author's views? How can you know? Find passages in the book which you feel reveal the attitude of Fitzgerald himself.

13. Earlier you learned that The Scarlet Letter was more accurately designated as a romance rather than as a novel. You also saw that The Mayor of Casterbridge had fewer traits of the romance than did The Scarlet Letter, but that it was not a novel in the strictest sense. After reviewing the definitions of a novel and a romance, try to decide what you would call The Great Gatsby.

14. Fitzgerald is able to recreate emotion for the reader through his image-laden prose. Read again the passage on page 148, where Gatsby tells of Daisy's young life when he first dated her. "He had never been in such a beautiful house before. . . Daisy lived there. . . There

was a ripe mystery about it," etc. Find other examples of this evocative type of writing.

15. Although the purpose of the book is serious, it is not without humor. For example, when Daisy asks Nick if she is missed in Chicago, he replies, "The whole town is desolate. All the cars have the left rear wheel painted black as a mourning wreath, and there's a persistent wail all night along the north shore." Find other similar light touches in the story.

16. How does Tom Buchanan represent the moral code of the established rich society of East Egg?

17. One theme of The Great Gatsby is Nick Carraway's initiation into the ways of the world. What do you think he learns in the course of the novel?

18. How do Gatsby's view and use of wealth differ from Daisy's and Tom's?

19. Do Meyer Wolfsheim and Ewing Klipspringer "use" Gatsby in different ways? Explain.

III. Detailed Questions

Chapter 1

1. Who is the narrator of the story? What kind of person is he? Why do you think the author was so careful to establish the background and character of the narrator?

2. Where does the story take place? Why do you suppose Miss Jordan spoke so contemptuously of West Egg?

3. Early in a story a writer often inserts little details that assume importance later on. What does Nick Carroway remember about Jordan Baker? How might this be important?

4. What does Tom's remark, "civilization's going to pieces," reveal about him? Why do you think the author inserted this brief discussion of The Rise of the Colored Empires?

5. Reread the author's description of Tom Buchanan. What kind of person is he?

6. What kind of person is Daisy? How does she reveal herself through her interests and her conversation? Fitzgerald's description of her also reinforces the impression. Find examples.

7. Gatsby is introduced to the reader in this chapter. How has the author built an air of mystery about him?

Chapter 2

8. A third "world" is revealed in this chapter, a "valley of ashes" grey and grim. What social class does this represent? What kind of people live in this neighborhood? How do they differ from the people of East Egg and West Egg?

9. Why do you think Fitzgerald added the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg looming large and unseeing over the grey dust?

10. Myrtle thinks Tom is a gentleman. Does his behavior in this chapter justify her belief? What kind of person does he reveal himself to be?

11. Nick knows that Tom as lied to Myrtle, and that he would never dream of marrying her. Why does he not tell what he knows? Is he approving of Tom's affair by being present at the party in the apartment? Why must he be there?

Chapter 3

12. What rumors about Gatsby circulate at the party? Why does the author choose to be so uncertain and vague about Gatsby's background?

13. How does the author, while describing the glittering party in Gatsby's "blue gardens," manage to show how empty the lives of the guests are? Find and comment upon details that help create the mood of restless seeking for something to fill the gap.

14. Do you see any contrast between the people at Gatsby's party and those at Myrtle's party? Does either group appear admirable in Nick's eyes? Explain.

15. Why does Gatsby give such lavish parties? Does he seem to enjoy them? How does he behave? How does this contrast with the guests' attitude toward their host?

16. Why do you think the author told about the drunken driver who lost a wheel after one of Gatsby's parties? What does the episode reveal about the people who come to the parties?

17. What is Nick's reaction to life in New York? Do you think the affair with Jordan would have progressed if Nick had not been lonely? Give your reasons.

18. The question of Jordan's honesty is raised again. How has Fitzgerald symbolized it in his descriptions of her? Why does she avoid "clever, shrewed men"?

19. Why does Nick not let her dishonesty bother him? He says of himself, "I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known." Would you agree?

Chapter 4

20. What is the purpose of the list of celebrities who visited Gatsby during the summer? What does the author mean when he says that they "accepted Gatsby's hospitality and paid him the subtle tribute of knowing nothing whatever about him"? Do you see anything ironic in the date of the timetable, or in the fact that the names are jotted down on an old timetable?

21. Why was Nick disappointed in Gatsby before their ride to New York together? Does Gatsby's story of his past ring true? What do you learn about him as a result of the ride and the lunch with Wolfsheim?

22. Jordan tells Nick about the early romance between Daisy and Gatsby. Knowing this, why do you suppose she encouraged Daisy to marry Tom? What does this tell you about Jordan?

23. How does Nick react to the request that he invite Daisy to tea so that Gatsby might meet her there? What does this tell you about Nick?

24. What new light is thrown on Tom's character in this chapter?

Chapter 5

25. At last the mystery surrounding Gatsby has been cleared away. He has made all his money in order to regain Daisy. What is Daisy's reaction to this revelation?

26. What is the significance of the shirts "piled like bricks in stacks a dozen high"?

27. When Gatsby's dream of Daisy, and the real Daisy meet, what happens? Explain the sentence "His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one (p. 94)".

28. What is it reasonable to suppose will come out of Gatsby's and Daisy's renewed relationship?

29. What have you learned about Nick as a result of his hand in the affairs of this chapter? Is he honest and admirable? Explain.

Chapter 6

30. At the beginning of this chapter, Gatsby's true origin and past is revealed. How does this contrast with the dream of himself he has created?

31. Comment upon the East Eggers who drop by Gatsby's on horseback invite him to dinner, and then leave without him. What does this action tell you about these people? What is their opinion of Gatsby?

32. When Tom learns from Gatsby that he already knows Daisy, Tom says, "By God, I may be old fashoined in my ideas, but women run around too much these days to suit me." Do you see anything ironic in this statement?

33. Why are Tom and Daisy critical of Gatsby's party? If she did not enjoy herself, why was Daisy reluctant to leave?

34. How might the movie star and her director typify the people at the party? What does Daisy's admiration of the actress tell about her?

35. What contrasts do you notice between this party and Gatsby's first party in Chapter 3? What do they tell you about Gatsby? about Nick?

36. How does Gatsby stand revealed at the end of the chapter? Do dreams and reality ever blend? What might the last two paragraphs foreshadow?

Chapter 7

37. The story moves to a climax in this chapter, and Gatsby enjoys a brief moment of triumph. At what point does he appear to have

achieved his dream? Why is he not able to hold his victory?

38. Fitzgerald has gradually removed the veils from Gatsby until we finally know him. What do the events of this chapter reveal about his character?

39. Why did Daisy allow Gatsby to assume the blame for the accident? What light is thrown upon both Daisy and Tom as a result of it?

40. What change is noticeable in Nick as a result of these incidents? How does it affect his relationship with Jordan? How does it change his attitude toward Gatsby?

41. Explain the last sentence.

Chapter 8

42. What is the significance of the dust in Gatsby's house? Where earlier in the book has dust been used to characterize a setting?

43. Gatsby's talk about Daisy helps to explain his dream. Why did the narrator say that Gatsby had "committed himself to the following of a grail"? In what way did Gatsby's quest for Daisy resemble a knightly romance?

44. Why does Gatsby hold wealth in such reverence?

45. Why did Nick repulse Jordan when she called him at his office? How does this indicate a change in Nick?

46. Once again the eyes of Dr. Eckleburg are mentioned as we are taken into Wilson's world of the ash heaps. What is the significance of this symbol?

47. Gatsby's dream ended the only way it could. Did he ever lose faith in Daisy? Did he face the ultimate reality of her betrayal? What clues can you find in the closing paragraphs?

Chapter 9

48. Nick says, "I found myself on Gatsby's side and alone." Why did he become involved in the final arrangments for this man he hardly knew? Why did every one else desert Gatsby at the end, and refuse to attend the funeral? Does the list of guests on the old timetable make more sense now?

49. What is the significance of the book Hopalong Cassidy and the writing on its flyleaf? How do they fit into Gatsby's later life?

50. What is Henry Gatz's view of his son ? How does it compare with Gatsby's conception of himself?

51. Are there in this chapter any characters besides Henry Gatz who cling to an illusion about the way things were? Explain.

52. Does Wolfsheim look at life in idealistic or in realistic terms? Leaving aside his criminal activities, would you say that he was more admirable as a human being than Tom? Explain.

53. Would you say that Tom has learned anything in the course of this book? Compare his last scene with his first one.

54. Is Jordan right when she implies that Nick had been dishonest with her? Is Nick's explanation to her satisfactory?

55. What connections do you see between Nick's thoughts about the West (pp. 176-7) and Gatsby's dream?

56. What final irony do you find in Nick's analysis on p. 182 of Gatsby's dream? Is the last sentence a good summary of the book?

IV. Writing Assignments and Supplementary Activities

1. It has been said that the test of a fully rounded character is for a reader to be able to predict how the character would act beyond incidents in the novel itself. Pick one of the rounded characters in the book and write a short scene about him which could have been included in the novel. For example, you might construct a meeting between Nick and Daisy after Gatsby's death. Remember that any such scene must be seen through the eyes of Nick himself.

2. It is often interesting to speculate about the unknown lives of characters met in a novel. For example, what do you think would have happened if Daisy had not married Tom Buchanan, but had waited for Gatsby to return from the war? Or, how successful do you think marriage would have been for Nick and Jordan? Write a composition along these or similar lines of speculation, but remember that your proof must come from the novel.

3. Previous questions have noted that The Great Gatsby is narrated by Nick, who is himself a character in the story. How would this point of view control a movie script which was faithful to this approach? Can

a movie be "told" from the point of view of a single character? How? Pick either the opening or closing chapters of The Great Gatsby and sketch a movie script, one which maintains Nick's point of view.

4. One facet of the novelist's art is that he is able to create a character with only a few significant details. Look back over Fitzgerald's technique, especially in his minor characters (e.g., Wolfsheim, Wilson, Klipspringer). How does Fitzgerald capture their personalities? Are the names he gives them significant? Try writing two or three short character sketches, ones which might fit well into some of the scenes of The Great Gatsby.

5. To what extent might the tragedy of Gatsby be similar to the universal predicament of any man in any society? In other words, what quest is basic to any man in any society? Is Henchard's quest in The Mayor of Casterbridge similar to it? How similar are Henchard's quest and Gatsby's quest? Write a short theme answering one of these questions or discussing a related topic.

6. While The Great Gatsby would not be classed as a satire, it certainly has elements of satire in it. For example, Fitzgerald satirizes Tom Buchanan and his position in society. Where else in the novel does Fitzgerald use satire? After noting how Fitzgerald satirizes characters, see if you can use some of the same techniques in a short satirical sketch or a satirical short story.

7. While The Great Gatsby is not autobiographical, it still deals with the social scene and cultural patterns of Fitzgerald's day. Thus, if you would like to find out more about the era presented in The Great Gatsby, one very good source would be the recent biography of Fitzgerald by Alexander Turnbull. Turnbull has also published a collection of Fitzgerald's letters, many of which make quite interesting reading. Of course, there are many other books on the Twenties, so that you should have no trouble finding sources which will allow you to gauge the accuracy of the scenes in The Great Gatsby.

8. If you liked The Great Gatsby, you might like to look up several of Fitzgerald's other works. For instance, Fitzgerald wrote many short stories. He also wrote This Side of Paradise, which is an autobiographical novel based on his experiences at Princeton University. Tender Is the Night is another of his major novels.

THE NOVEL: SOME GENERAL QUESTIONS

Now that you have closely examined three novels, you should attempt to draw some general conclusions about the novel as a genre or literary form. To aid you, the following questions suggest some of the areas which you might profitably discuss. Of course, don't expect to arrive at hard and fast conclusions, for even experienced critics disagree about some of the following topics; instead, use the questions as the starting point for an inquiry which should continue as long as you read and enjoy novels.

1. In many of the preceding questions and comments, the term novel has been applied to The Scarlet Letter, The Mayor of Casterbridge, and The Great Gatsby. Yet, several of the questions indicated that this wide use of novel was not quite accurate and that the term romance should have been used. From this divided usage and from your own knowledge, would you say that the term novel has different definitions? See if you can formulate a general definition and a technical definition for novel, indicating when each meaning should appropriately be used.

2. Now that you know what a novel is, contrast it with a short story, a ballad, a play, or the other literary forms you have met in earlier units. If you had the basic idea for a story or narrative, what factors would lead you to decide upon one of these literary forms and to reject the others? Would you be governed only by your own abilities and preferences, or would you have to consider the form of your story and its probable effect upon readers or an audience? Explain.

3. Which came first, an example of a novel or the definition of the novel? Though a knowledge of literary history might help you fix the probable date of either the first novel or the first definition, what does your intuition tell you about the probable origin of both? In what ways does an awareness of the definition affect a modern writer? Do you think it would be easier to write something to fit a definition or to write something without any concern for a definition? Explain.

4. One characteristic of a novel which has not been stressed in previous questions is that it is a form of fiction. Does this mean that nothing in a novel is based on actual fact? Use references to the three novels in this unit to answer this question. Of the three authors in this unit, which does not set his novel in his own era? Did he also pick a geographical section of the world with which he was unfamiliar? What about the other two authors? Were they both familiar with the people and places in their books? What generalization can you make about the

source of an author's material? If you ever had the urge to write a short story or a novel, what sort of settings and narrative material should you probably consider using?

5. When the American edition of Henry James' The Ambassadors first appeared, the order of two of its chapters was reversed; the novel even went through several later American editions before this error was corrected. At the same time, the British edition had the correct order. Some people might claim that this editing error meant that for a number of years there were two different novels entitled The Ambassadors. Do you think that the order of the material in a book makes any difference in the final effect upon the reader? To what extent do you think any of the novels read in this unit would have been affected by a reversal of chapters or a rearrangement of narrative details? For example, what would happen if you had read Chapter 9 of The Great Gatsby before you read the rest of the book? Do novelists ever give you the last scene before giving you the incidents which lead up to it? Can you think of any other examples of reversals in the novels of this unit or in other novels you have read?

6. A novel was recently published by a Latin American author who in his preface gave two different plans for reading it. He suggested either that it be read from start to finish as printed or that it be read by using a sequence of chapters which he suggested (e.g., chapters 2, 6, 7, 10, 1, 8, 3, etc.). Assuming that the narrative order of the printed version was strictly chronological, which method of reading would demand more skill from the reader? Which method of reading would be closer to the way you learn about the personality and background of someone you meet? Could you justify the assertion that the printed form of a given novel is only one of the millions of forms it might have taken? Do you think a novelist always has a reason for the form he chooses? Support your answer by references to the forms of the novels in this unit? Does this train of questions suggest any ways a novel may be criticized? Explain.

7. As with many art forms, the novel pretends to reflect some version of reality. Yet, in many of the preceding questions, you have been discussing ways in which the novelist artificially organizes his material. To what extent is a work that we call realistic actually realistic? As a starting point you might consider the use of dialogue in a novel. To what extent is realistic dialogue really realistic? To what extent does realistic dialogue only possess the illusion of reality? Defend your answer by references to the three novels in this unit or to other works of prose fiction with which you are familiar.

8. Almost all of the questions up to this point have been concerned with two key questions: (1) What has the author attempted to do? (2) How successful was he? However, there is one other question which, though almost impossible to answer, does deserve some discussion. This question is: Was what the author attempted worth doing? With this question all sorts of sticky problems have to be considered. What does "worth" mean? How do your personal tastes and preferences affect your answers to this question? Defend your answers by reference to the three novels in this unit. If you think one of them wasn't worth reading, ask yourself why you felt this way. Also, you might ask yourself what you expect to gain, if anything, from reading a novel.